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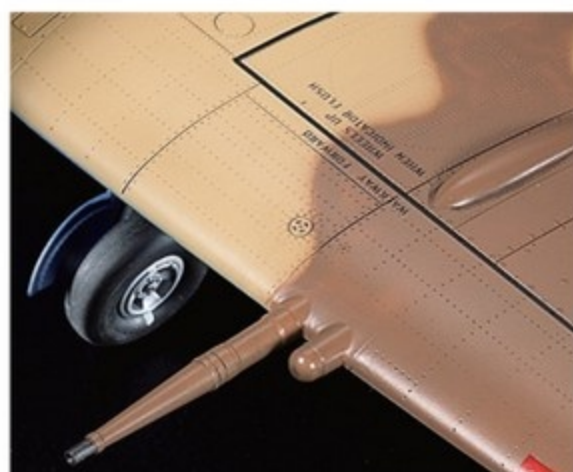
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October 2010

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ISSN 0268-8328

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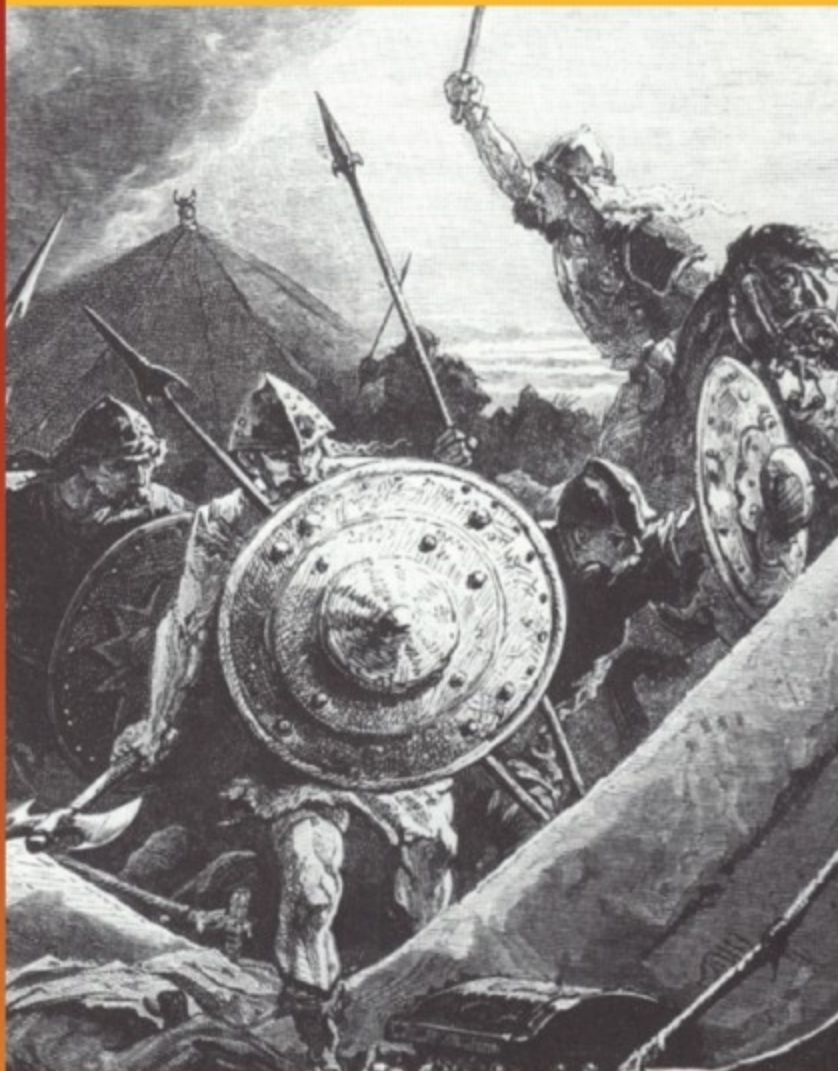
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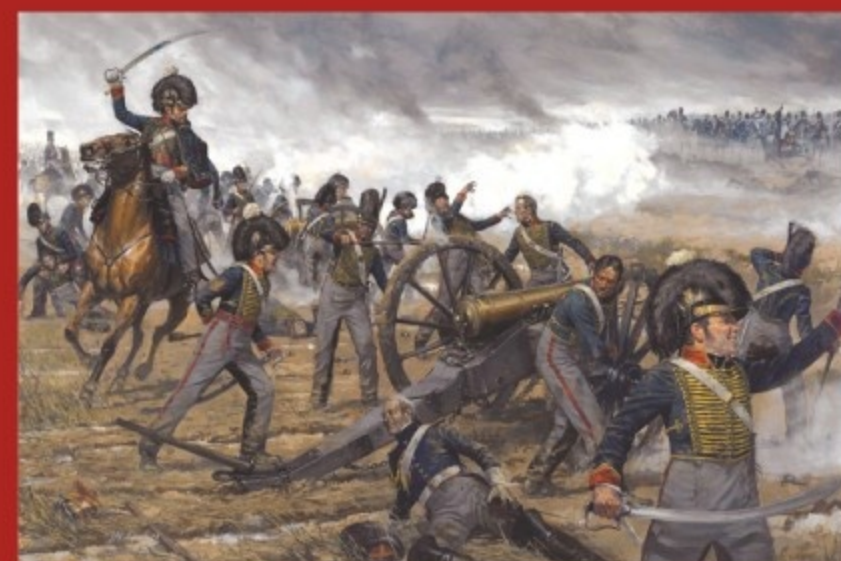


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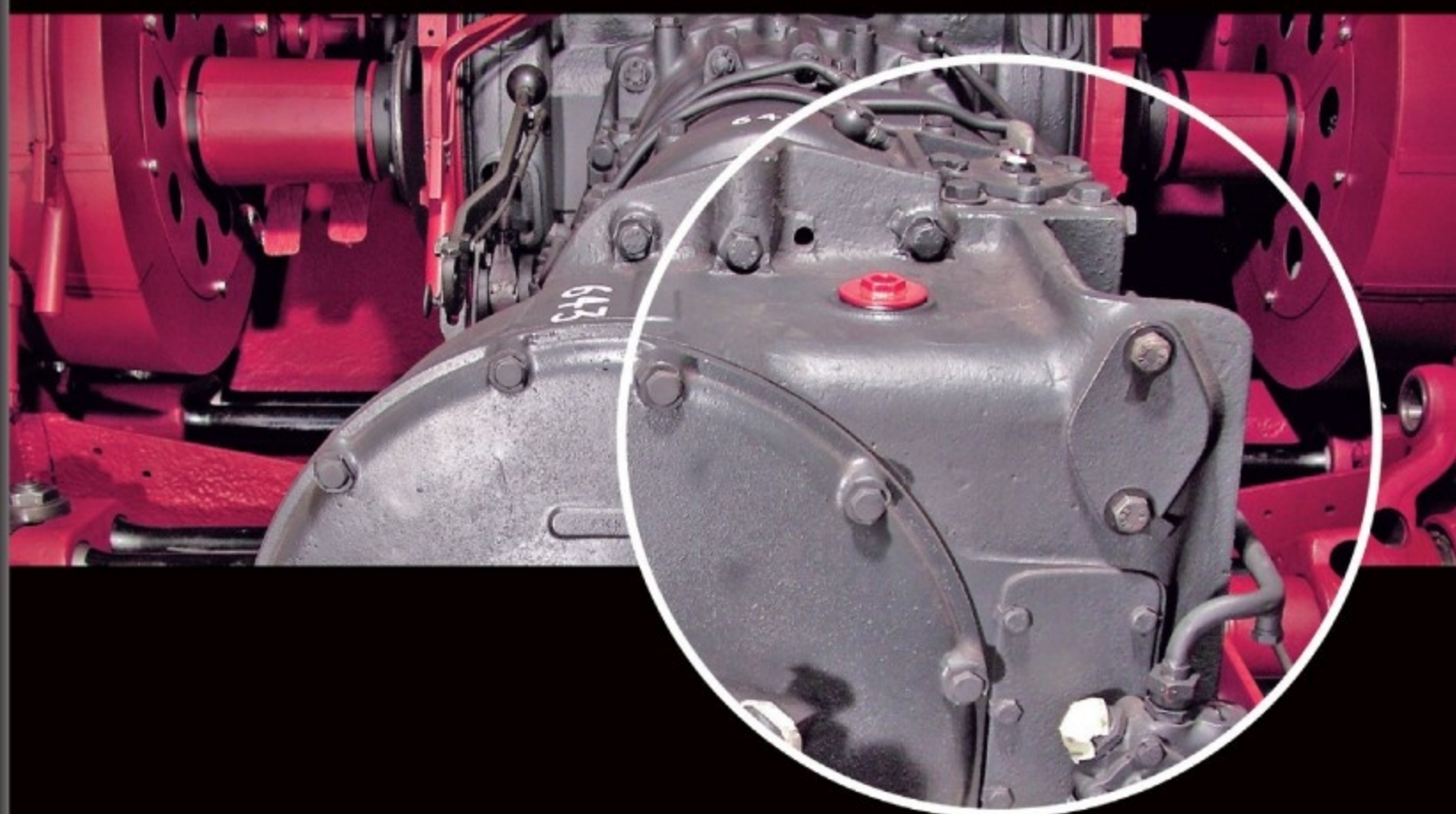
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THE ULTIMATE PANTHER GUIDE

THE RESEARCH SQUAD



panther project

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The Wheatcroft Collection

The Research Squad (Lee Lloyd, Alisdair Johnson, Brian Balkwill) share a common passion to the preservation and restoration of items of historical interest. To this end we are working with The Wheatcroft Collection to publish a series of books on significant items and restoration projects. These include a Panther Tank, and S130, the last remaining German S-boat.

Our first publication - The Panther Project Vol 1: Drivetrain and Hull begins the photodocumentary series of books detailing the full restoration of a Panther tank at the Wheatcroft Collection. Our second book due for publication early in the new year -

Tiger: A Modern Study of Fgst. Nr 250031 - is a 160 page photostudy of the Tiger tank currently housed at the collection.

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Readers' Letters

MI readers are invited to write to the Editor. Letters should be addressed to: Tim Newark, Military Illustrated, 3 Barton Buildings, off Queen Square, Bath BA1 2JR. E-mail: timn@fsmail.net

Diving into the Past

Treasures retrieved from sailing vessels wrecked in treacherous waters off the Florida coast are to be analysed by experts at the University of Huddersfield. They won't be getting their hands on gold, silver or casks of fabulous jewels, but to members of the Arms and Armour Research Group, the artefacts they will examine are equally precious.

The group, which includes historians, scientists and specialists in weaponry, has been forging important international links. And the latest is with the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society, a not-for-profit organisation that runs a massively popular museum at Key West, in Florida. It is named after its benefactor, a diver who

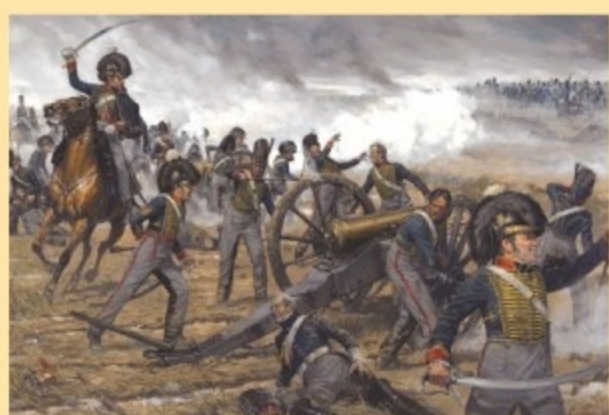


combed the seas off the Florida coast in search of sunken ships. One of his most spectacular finds was a Spanish galleon named the *Atocha*, sunk in 1622.

Corey Malcom, the Society's Director of Archaeology, has recently become the first scholar to enrol in a PhD programme

set up jointly by the University of Huddersfield's Arms and Armour Research Group and its partners the Frazier International History Museum in Kentucky. As part of this latest collaboration, members of the research group and Corey Malcom will be working together on weaponry retrieved from a Spanish ship named the *Santa Clara* that was sunk in 1564. Records show that all of the crew were saved when they were taken on board a nearby ship, but they had to leave the entire contents of the *Santa Clara* behind them.

Waterloo Collection



The second series of the Waterloo Collection is now finally available. For further information visit www.waterloo-collection.com

Steve Stanton

Moscow Details

A few comments on the 'Battle for Moscow' (MI 267): Page 24—Soviet Alpine Soldiers. They are ski troops but not at all 'Alpine', that is they were not trained as mountain troops but only to use skis in a snow environment, like the Finns but not like the French Chasseurs Alpins,

the Italians Alpini and the German Alpenjäger or the US 10th division. Moreover the MG on skis is a Maxim usually classified as an HMG and not an LMG; Page 26—Fedor von Bock was awarded the Pour le Mérite on 01/04/1918. At the time he was a Major, hardly a very junior rank. Quite

obviously considering that he was 38 years old at the time; Page 28—The gun is a 15cm schwere Feldhaubitze 18 not a 21cm (210mm) piece. This one was much more massive and was usually split in two parts for towing except on short distances.

Maurilio Tamaio, Milan

www.TimNewark.com



Cover: British soldier wears mountain warfare equipment, 1940.

Military Illustrated is published monthly by ADH Publishing Ltd.

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PRINTING

Symbian Print Intelligence

UK & US ADVERTISING

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ADH Publishing Ltd
Doolittle Mill, Doolittle Lane
Totternhoe, Beds, LU6 1QX
Tel: 01525 222573
colin@adhpublishing.com

UK NEWSAGENT DISTRIBUTION

Seymour Distribution
2 East Poultry Avenue
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Tel: 020 7429 4000

NEWSTRADE

Select Publisher Services
3 East Avenue
Bournemouth, BH3 7BW
Tel: 01202 586848
tim@selectps.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Military Illustrated
ADH Publishing Ltd
Doolittle Mill, Doolittle Lane
Totternhoe, Beds, LU6 1QX
enquiries@adhpublishing.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

12 Issues UK: £42
Europe: £62 Worldwide: £77

The paper used in this magazine is manufactured at the Leipa Georg Mill and is 100% recycled using de-inked pulp. The mill conforms fully with the requirements of both FSC and PEFC and carries the full accreditations for their environmental policies



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THE RESEARCH SQUAD

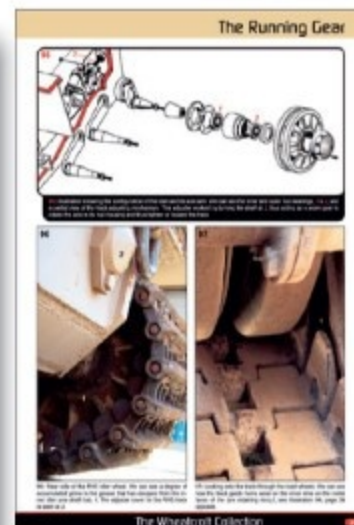
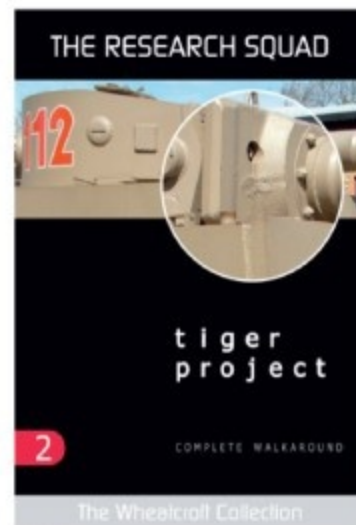
The Panther Project Vol 1: Drivetrain and Hull £16.99

The first in a series of full colour volumes documenting the restoration of a Panther A at the Wheatcroft Collection. 88 pages, 360+ images covering radiator, engine and fighting compartments. Additional sections cover turret, fixtures and fittings, and recent developments



Tiger: A Modern Study of Fgst. NR. 250031 £TBA

The first full colour photostudy of Tiger Fgst. 250031 currently housed at the collection. AT +/- 180 pages, it will cover the full exterior, interior and engine compartment and will include new diagrams and also colour images from original manuals. Release date early 2009



The Research Squad share a common passion to the preservation and restoration of items of historical interest. Our aim is to professionally research, document and publish studies on historically significant subjects in a variety of media. To this end we are currently working with The Wheatcroft Collection to publish a series of books on significant items and restoration projects.

One such exciting project is the restoration of S130, the last remaining WW2 Schnellboot. In partnership with Military Modelling International we will be bringing regular updates on the projects to the magazine.

Check out www.S130.co.uk website to follow the restoration!

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MAYHEM IN NARVIK

Seventy years ago, the Allied assault on Narvik was a first strike against the German war machine. SIMON REES reveals the fighting contribution made by soldiers from different nations, including the Polish Highland Brigade.

Beset by human error and deserted by luck at the beginning of the war, the Allies could have been forgiven for thinking their failures almost farcical had they not had such a deadly consequence in lives and territory lost. But in the north of Norway, there was a glimmer of hope—Narvik. By mid-May 1940, the possibility of an Allied victory in this imposing region was tantalisingly close. And for one sizable contingent, the Polish Highland Brigade – the Independent Podhala_ska Rifle Brigade – the opportunity to fight for freedom was at hand.

Blow to German industry

Prior to the development of Narvik's port at the turn of the 20th century, the shipping of Swedish iron ore in winter was hampered by the Gulf of Bothnia

freezing up. Building a rail line from the main ore fields to Narvik allowed for all-year shipping. In 1938, it was estimated the Third Reich imported 22 million tons of iron ore, with two to three million tons shipped via Narvik during the winter. The British and French took careful note. In the autumn of 1939, the British Ministry of Economic Warfare computed that Germany needed an average of 750,000 tons of iron ore per month in the first year of the war or risk 'major industrial breakdown'. By interrupting the flow of ore via Narvik, a major blow to Germany's industrial base could be dealt.

Of course, there was another, less publicised reason for intervening in Norway—many considered it an excellent location for a second front. Fighting the Germans in the north would distract them from the west, giving the Allies precious

time to continue arming and building up reserves, which was precisely why Hitler was initially keen to maintain Norwegian neutrality. But the Fuhrer's attitude soon changed when war between Finland and the USSR broke out on 30 November 1939. There was increased concern that the Allies would use the conflict as a pretext to intervene in Scandinavia and, in turn, strangle the vital flow of iron ore to Germany. The hunch proved correct, with the French notably bullish in calling for an expeditionary force to occupy Narvik and the Swedish iron ore fields as part of the process of assisting Finland.

A further spur to planning stemmed from the dramatic interception in February 1940 of *Altmark*, a transport ship that had linked up with the *Graf Spee* and taken aboard around 300 PoWs captured by the pocket battleship during its ill-fated rampage. *Altmark* had managed to reach



Zygmunt Bohusz-Szyszko commanded the Polish Highland Brigade at Narvik. In 1941, he was appointed head of the Polish military mission in Moscow until 1943, when he joined and served with Anders' command in the Polish II Corps.



A German map of the time showing the Norwegian landing sites for Operation Weserübung. Norway's politicians were caught completely off guard despite receiving intelligence that an invasion was being prepared. Even the sinking of Rio de Janeiro and the testimony of surviving German soldiers failed to spark an urgent call to arms.

Norwegian waters when she was chased up a fjord and boarded by the Royal Navy destroyer Cossack. Germany viewed Norway's passive response to Cossack's actions as indicative of its tacit support for Britain. Believing the Allies would intervene in Norway sooner or later, the Germans finalised their blueprint for a pre-emptive strike: several flotillas would capture Oslo and other key ports in an audacious surprise attack. On 2 April, Operation Weserübung was given clearance, with German task forces leaving at staggered intervals to ensure all units arrived at their targets on 8/9 April.

For the Allies, final preparations for a Scandinavian expeditionary force were scuppered after Finland agreed to Russian terms on 12 March. However, staging an action in Norway remained a priority and a Royal Navy plan to lay mines in Norwegian waters was given clearance at a Supreme War Council on 28 March. Any aggressive countermove by Germany would be met with a rush of Allied troops to Norway. The operation was scheduled for 5 April but then postponed until 8 April, creating a great deal of confusion. It also meant the enemy was now several vital steps ahead.

Bold submarine

Norway's politicians reacted to events on 8/9 April with disbelief and vacillation, despite receiving intelligence that a German invasion was afoot –including the testimony of around 100 bedraggled German soldiers rescued by Norwegian ships after their transport ship, Rio de

Janeiro, was sunk off the southern coast on 8 April. The survivors declared they had been heading to Bergen as part of a German operation to 'protect' Norway from the Allies.

Rio de Janeiro was sunk by the Polish submarine Orze_ under the command of Captain Grudzinski. In the previous year, as the Blitzkrieg swallowed up Poland, Orze_ headed to the safety of Tallinn, Estonia. But unwilling to remain impounded under the rules of neutrality, the submariners kidnapped their Estonian guards and escaped with their vessel. Without charts or compass they reached the Swedish coast where they landed their captives and handed them whisky, cash and cigarettes by way of compensation.

Orze_ was an extremely welcome asset for the Royal Navy and she was involved in several other engagements in Norwegian waters after sinking Rio de Janeiro until, in early June, radio contact was lost. The vessel had vanished. Numerous theories about this disaster have been mooted, although the most likely cause was striking a sea mine. In summer 2008, a Polish expedition searched the area where Orze_ was presumed lost. Although several wrecks were discovered, she was not among them and the fate of the submarine and her 63-man crew remains a mystery.

On landing, German units consistently outfoxed and outmanoeuvred the bewildered Norwegians. At Narvik, the taskforce arrived after destroying two superannated dreadnoughts that had bravely but forlornly tried to halt the

invaders. Led by General Dietl, 1,200 men – experienced Gebirgsjäger (mountain troops) of the German 3rd Mountain Division – quickly secured the port, whose defenders either slipped away or surrendered.

The Allies were now on the back foot and would remain so until the end of the campaign. However, they scored some early naval successes at Narvik. On 10 April and 13 April, the Royal Navy contained and then decimated the German flotilla in the harbour and neighbouring fjords. But the Kriegsmarine's misfortune proved advantageous for Dietl: the surviving naval personnel were placed under his command, almost doubling the available manpower. And while their quality as soldiers was poor, they allowed the German general to plug important gaps in his defence lines. Later on, with the German perimeter shrinking and the casualties mounting, Dietl was reinforced with the arrival of transport aircraft and seaplanes ferrying in men and equipment, the drop of parachute units and, more controversially, the crossing of neutral Sweden's border by German 'specialists'. However, the numbers involved were not large. From 14-22 May, for example, only 300 men and two anti-tank guns arrived within the perimeter.

The British response had been to rush the 24 Guards Brigade to the Narvik theatre, while raw territorial troops – far too few in number and weakly armed – were thrown into central Norway to face the German juggernaut that was now relentlessly pushing north out of Oslo.



Enemy troops trudge behind a tank during the advance through central Norway. Given Germany's dominance in the field and in the air, these men have almost every reason to appear nonchalant.

Setting up an operational base at the small port of Harstad, 55km northwest of Narvik, British planning was hesitant. The commander of Allied land forces, Maj Gen Mackesy, favoured a step-by-step approach along both sides of Ofotfjord, the fjord leading to Narvik. Mackesy argued that the grim weather and the lack of necessary equipment, including skis, precluded any other form of advance. The navy – led by Lord Cork, who was soon appointed the theatre's overall commander – believed a swift opposed landing offered the best possible solution. Mackesy considered Cork's plans too dangerous and refused to countenance them. This back-and-forth argument between the two men manifested itself in the ineffective bombardment of Narvik's hinterland by the British battleship *Warspite* and several destroyers on 24 April.

In the meantime, north of Narvik, Norway's 6th Division – responsible for defending the region – had been rallied by the tough but irascible Major-General Fleischer and was now engaging the enemy. And while the Norwegians suffered from inexperience and struggled against the dismal conditions, their efforts were at least grinding the enemy down.

Polish Highland Brigade

Far from the icy and forbidding fjords of Narvik, thousands of Polish troops

were busy training in the countryside of Coëtquidan, Brittany. Among these men were the soldiers of the newly-formed Polish Highland Brigade, which came into official existence on 29 February, 1940.

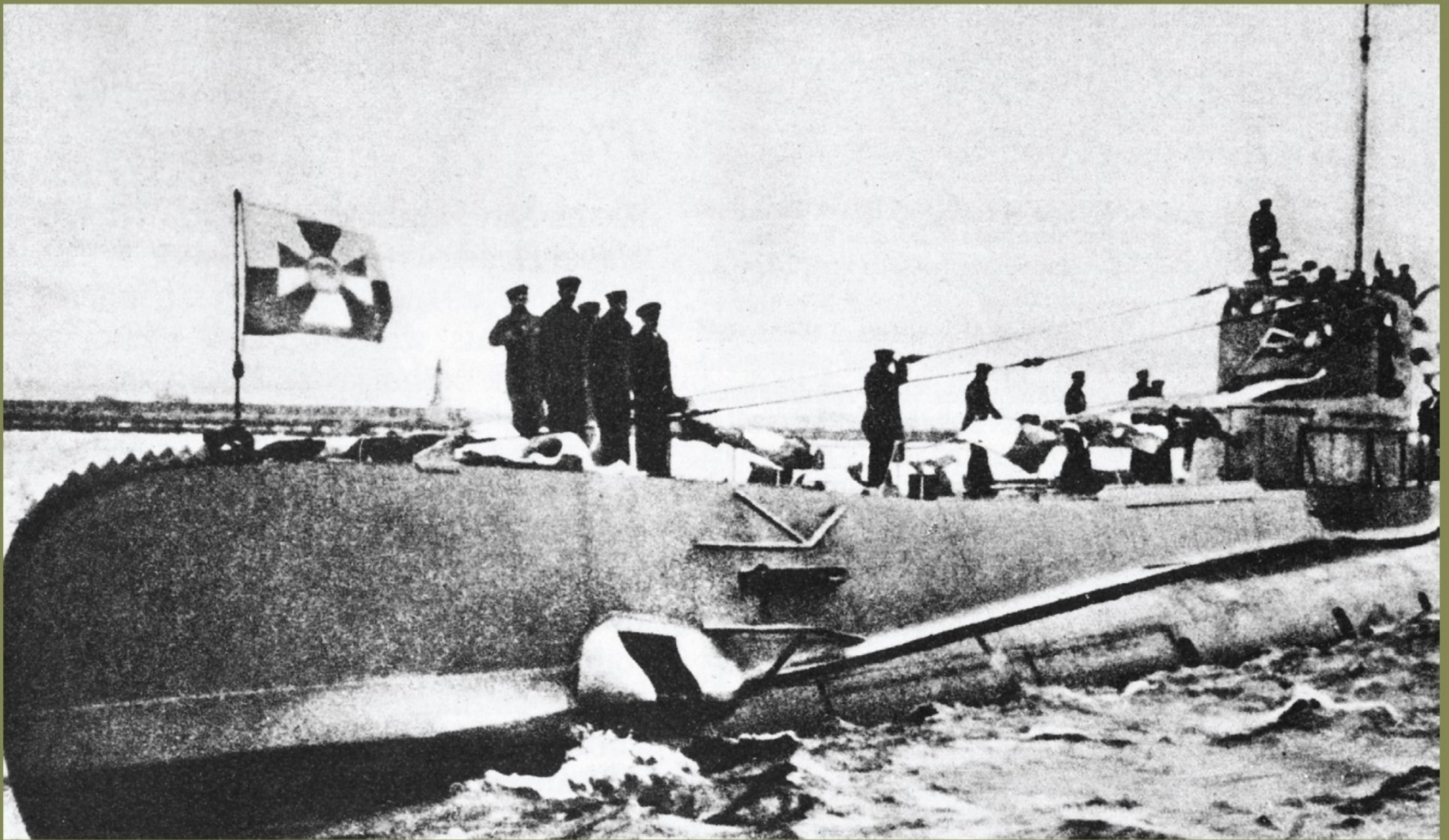
Manpower for the Free Polish Army primarily came from two sources: from the thousands of troops and civilians that escaped Poland via its southern borders, or from the large Polish immigrant communities within France. Often labelled Carpathian Chasseurs, few of the unit's members came from the mountains of southern Poland. But interestingly, the brigade contained a smattering of troops that had seen action and gained valuable experience fighting for the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War.

The aim was to quickly create an elite formation and the training was, by necessity, fast paced. The unit was composed of two half brigades, each comprising two battalions. In overall command was Zygmunt Bohusz-Szyszko – promoted to Major-General on 9 April, 1940 – who had served in the Tsarist army during the First World War and had led the Polish 16th Division in 1939. Polish High Command placed the brigade on alert as soon as the German invasion of Norway started. On 10 April, a full parade took place, with General Sikorski, head of the Free Polish armed forces, attending. 'It will be your honour to lead the way,' he said,

before presenting the brigade with its new colours, a gift from the army's field bishop, Józef Gawlina.

On the night of the 23/24 April, the 4,778-strong Highland Brigade boarded three liners bound for Norway. Following a dull voyage that was punctuated with the excitement and fear of a submarine contact, the Poles arrived off Tromsø on 5 May. The dramatic Norwegian coast filled them with awe and trepidation. 'The hearts of the Polish soldiers sank at the sight of the huge, tooth-like mountains,' wrote Karol Zbyszewski and Józef Natanson later in 1940. Few Poles had ever seen a landscape like it.

Misguidedly, the Allies intended to move the brigade into East Finnmark province, which bordered Russia. The Norwegians opposed this: stationing Poles near Russians would have been more than impolitic given the USSR's annexation of eastern Poland under the Molotov/Ribbentrop pact in 1939. Quickly seeing sense, the Allies ordered the Poles to land at Harstad, which they did on 7/8 May. The Polish 1st Half Brigade camped outside the small port along with headquarters staff and support troops. Meanwhile, 2nd Half Brigade's 3rd Battalion was transferred to Ballangen for use as a security force, while its 4th Battalion was sent to Salangen. Many of the men now heard about the destruction of the Polish destroyer *Grom*, sunk on 5



The Polish submarine *Orzeł*; its escape through the Baltic and on to Britain without charts or compass is now the stuff of legend. After sinking *Rio de Janeiro*, the submarine continued to operate in Norwegian waters until contact was suddenly and inexplicably lost.

May in Ofotfjord by an enemy air strike with the loss of 59 men.

The Poles landed shortly after several French units, including the 27th Half-Brigade of Chasseurs Alpins that arrived on 28 April and the 13th Half Brigade, comprising two Foreign Legion battalions and several support elements, which arrived on 6 May. French and Polish forces were under the overall command of Brigadier-General Marie Emilie Béthouart, who had already been involved in operations at Namsos, central Norway, until ordered by French High Command to take control of units in the Narvik theatre.

French Foreign Legion

Although total Allied numbers in the theatre now stood at around 25,000, Mackesy's strategy still dominated. On the northern side of Ofotfjord, a methodical advance to Bjerkvik was proposed. On the southern side, the South Wales Borderers and a French ski platoon landed unopposed at Skjomnes west of the Ankenes peninsula. Their goal was the village of Ankenes that overlooks Beisfjord, with Narvik immediately beyond. Although there were only weak German outposts in this area, the enemy was able to call in machine gun and artillery fire on the only road west of the village, which stopped the Borderers from reaching their objective. Now

alert to the threat, the Germans rushed Gebirgsjäger and naval personnel to the peninsula and counter attacked. British and French reinforcements were pushed back until the enemy came under naval fire and was also forced to withdraw.

The most notable Allied success in the days that followed was the capture of Bjerkvik. At Béthouart's insistence, the two battalions of the French Foreign Legion took this strategic village and its environs at the head of Herjangsfjord on 12/13 May using early versions of landing craft. Simultaneously, the Norwegians and Chasseurs Alpins were continuing to fight

and gain ground in the north.

The Poles played a small but notable part in this action. The 2nd Battalion landed at Lenvik and, supported by Norwegian ski detachments and British ships, was able to clear the northwest side of Herjangsfjord on 13 May and then link up with the French on 14 May. The enemy's security force fell back but soon discovered its line of retreat cut off. Heading into the mountains, this platoon-sized unit became lost until it stumbled into Gratangsbotn on 16 May, where it was swiftly captured by the French.

Success at Bjerkvik gave Allied forces a shot in the arm, as did the arrival of



Major-General Auchinleck, who took over from the disappointing Mackesy. However, news from north-central Norway was becoming increasingly grim; British efforts to stem an advance by the German 2nd Mountain Division to reach and relieve Dietl were failing. For the Poles, a second naval disaster occurred when the converted liner *Chrobry*, carrying the Irish Guards in Vestfjord to the south, was hit by an enemy airstrike. Fortunately, the soldiers and sailors onboard were transferred to ships that raced alongside and around 700 men were saved, although ten Poles and three British crewmen were killed, as were several Guards officers. Days later, the slowly-sinking *Chobry* was sent to the bottom by aircraft flying from *Ark Royal*.

The rising aerial threat led Cork and Auchinleck to prioritise the preparation of airfields for RAF fighters. Efforts were centred on Bardufoss airfield, northeast of Narvik, which became operational in late May. Several Gladiator biplanes from No 263 Squadron arrived on 25 May, joined the following day by Hurricanes from No 46 Squadron. But with good news came bad: on 24/25 May, Allied command in Narvik was informed that operations in Norway were being brought to a close. With German armies punching through the Western Front, there were far greater concerns to worry about. However, it was stressed that the capture of Narvik and the destruction of its iron ore installations remained a priority before evacuation occurred.

Fierce resistance

The Ankenes peninsula became an exclusively Polish concern by 19 May. The transfer of control started on 14 May with the arrival of two Polish battalions ferried in small boats from Bjerkvik to replace the South Wales Borderers, who were then shipped south to try and help tackle the advance of the German 2nd Mountain Division. Soon afterwards, another battalion arrived and replaced the French 12th Battalion Chasseurs Alpins. They were followed by the final Polish battalion and headquarters staff, arriving on 19 May. The Poles were supported by British artillery units and a small number of AA guns.

Opposing them were two companies of enemy Gebirgsjäger: 6 Company 139th Reg was defending positions in and around Ankenes village, while 7 Company 139th Reg held several hills to the south. On 17/18 May, under the midnight sun, the Polish Highland Brigade 2nd Battalion attempted to forward its lines but met fierce resistance.

Nine Poles were killed and 15 wounded. It was a grim lesson in the dangers and difficulties of mountain warfare.

German command was well aware that the defenders of Ankenes were in need of more assistance; 6 Company was relieved by 8 Company 139th Reg on 18/19 May, while naval personnel, engineers and reconnaissance platoons were also sent over. A major boost for the defenders was the arrival of 118 men from 2 Company 137th Reg that had parachuted into the Narvik theatre on 25 May and been moved

to the peninsula on 27 May. However, the Highland Brigade was quick to build up and maintain pressure, and while the enemy was able to call in air strikes, the Poles would often continue operations once the aircraft disappeared. Momentum was on their side and victory in their sights.

In the meantime, with the clock ticking down to evacuation and air cover now in place, the Allies were finally ready to tackle Narvik. At midnight 27/28 May, French and Norwegian troops landed 1.5km east of the port. Around 290 Legionnaires



British soldier poses in equipment designed for mountain warfare. An image for public consumption, very little of this kit was available to British troops in Norway.



Men of the newly-formed Polish Highland Brigade take an oath of service in France. Note how many of the soldiers are wearing long capes, which added a touch of distinction to the brigade's uniform.



An impromptu group shot on board one of the liners taking the Highland Brigade to Norway.

arrived first, racing up the slopes of the beach towards their first objectives. Unfortunately, two H-39 light tanks that were meant to follow and offer support became bogged down. Nonetheless, the French held their ground and, despite delays in bringing up reinforcements, secured control of the beachhead by 04:00. On their right – fighting to take the high ground on the eastern approach to Narvik – was the Norwegian 2nd Battalion 15th Reg.

Although the Germans started to counter attack, their efforts were constrained by

incoming naval fire. But the tide was almost turned when RAF fighter cover was forced to return to base after fog was reported approaching Bardufoss. The Luftwaffe was free to bomb British ships, which were forced to take evasive action as a result. On the ground, the Germans launched another stinging counter attack. As the danger mounted, Lieutenant Commander Balfour – who had lost his signals lamps in the German push – rushed down to the shore, boarded a landing craft and ordered it to head back out into the fjord. He eventually

reached Coventry, which signalled Beagle to head back and give support. Her 4.7 inch guns had the desired effect and forced the Germans to retire.

Shortly after this, the fog at Bardufoss cleared and three Hurricanes were immediately scrambled. Their presence was enough to scatter the German aircraft and allowed the British ships to resume their supporting role. By 11:00, a second battalion of French troops had landed, adding extra impetus to the drive forward. The Germans were now steadily retreating towards defensive positions nearer to the Swedish border. Victorious, Béthouart was more than happy to grant the Norwegian battalion the honour of entering Narvik first. French and Norwegians casualties stood at 150, with the former suffering 34 dead and 50 wounded.

Lethal cross fire

Just as the French and Norwegians started their operation to take Narvik, so too did the Polish effort to take control of the Ankenes peninsula. The 1st Battalion was to tackle Hills 670 and 773 to the south, while the 2nd Battalion was to eliminate German positions close to Ankenes village. Sections from the 4th Battalion maintained positions on Hills 677 and 734, acting as close support. The rest of the 4th Battalion and the 3rd Battalion were placed in reserve.

The attack started at 00:00, with 3 Company 2nd Battalion heading up the road to Ankenes. The weight of navy and artillery fire impressed those about to go into action. 'The whole mountain became one continuous explosion,' recalled Zbyszewski and Natanson. The Poles managed to reach the outskirts of Ankenes village by 02:00 but then fell into a lethal cross fire, forcing them to retreat towards Emmenes.

At 00:20, 1 Company also engaged the enemy, but at close quarters. 'Crawling from stone to stone, Germans and Poles were firing at each other at point blank range,' Zbyszewski and Natanson wrote. During the melee, the Poles allowed a dangerous gap to open up with 3 Company, which the enemy was quick to exploit. A unit of 15 Germans rushed towards Hill 295 – exactly where 1st Battalion commander Lt-Col Dec was located. Although their numbers were small – and it was not long before the attackers were whittled down to eight – they were able to inflict heavy casualties on Dec's orderlies and staff, who were not equipped for a vicious fire fight. 'The officers had to hold them at bay with their revolvers,' according to Zbyszewski

and Natanson.

The eight Germans managed to hold Hill 295 until 20:00 after using up all ammunition and throwing back three Polish counter-attacks. They then withdrew to Beisfjord, found a boat and attempted to escape. But they were spotted and incoming fire sank the boat, killing the bulk of its occupants.

At 02:00, 2 Company started its attack and came under vicious machine gun fire to the north of Hill 405. Fortunately, two platoons from 2 Company 4th Battalion tackled this position, allowing their comrades to continue on towards Nyborg, which they took by 09:00. Here the Poles also caught German units attempting to evacuate from Ankenes across Beisfjord. Again the enemy's boats were riddled with Polish fire – two were overturned in the fusillade and several German troops drowned.

As 2nd Battalion's companies battled to make headway, those from 1st Battalion were also struggling against the limpet-like defence. Attacking Hills 650 and 773, the Poles were initially thrown back until the 4 Company 4th Battalion sprang into action and managed to force the bulk of the enemy to withdraw. However, a four-man machine gun team remained on the top of Hill 650, battling fiercely to hold off the Polish advance. The position was held until finally stormed by 1 Company 1st Battalion at 21:00.

Hours later, tired and exhausted, the Poles were in command of the Ankenes peninsula, with advanced elements in control of Beisfjord village at the head of the fjord. In the final days of May, Béthouart used French and Polish units to advance on Sildvik. The Poles often found themselves struggling to make assaults in weather that remained resolutely dismal. And while the enemy was on its last legs – the Germans were short of supplies and tired from constant fighting – their morale was unshaken.

Out of time

For the people of Narvik, the campaign came to a terrible culmination on 30 May when Luftwaffe bombers struck. 'The Allies had taken all possible trouble to spare the city. But soon after its capture by them, the Nazis, for no strategic reason, wantonly, out of sheer spite, at one stroke reduced it to ashes,' noted Zbyszewski and Natanson.

Starting on June 4, the evacuation was a success, surprising not only the Germans but also the Norwegians, who had no inkling of the Allied decision. Leaving on June 6 and June 7, most Polish troops



Norwegian soldiers taking a break. These men fought in terrible conditions to the north of Narvik, slogging through harsh mountain terrain and battling a tenacious enemy.



For most British soldiers the reality of fighting in Norway was a grim experience of fighting without the right equipment, support or training for the task in hand. Many lost their lives, while others – shown here – were captured.



Released on 8 May 1940, this photo shows German infantry 'taking cover' in a ditch in southern Norway, according to the censor. But delays of this sort were few and far between. German superiority in equipment, aircraft and tanks proved too much for the Allies to contain—only in Narvik was the situation reversed.

thought they were being redeployed to the south to help contain the advancing German 2nd Mountain Division as their French and Norwegian comrades delivered the coup de grace to Dietl's forces. The discovery that this was not be and that the campaign was over left many stunned. As the ships left Narvik, 'they stood staring, staring at that country, so foreign and yet so much their own, won only yesterday with their toil and blood', wrote Zbyszewski and Natanson. Polish losses stood at 97 dead, 189 wounded, 21 missing and seven taken prisoner.

Thousands of Allied troops were evacuated without incident and with them was Håkon, King of Norway, and General Fleischer. Others were less lucky. Hitler had given Grand Admiral Raeder permission to use the heavy cruisers Gneisenau, Scharnhorst and Admiral Hipper in a strike on Allied shipping into Harstad. Instead, they stumbled upon several retreating Allied ships, some of which fell victim to the German guns. The greatest loss was the aircraft carrier *Glorious*. Of 1,559 listed on board, only 40 survived.

At 22:00 on 8 June, Norway's supreme commander Major-General Ruge notified the enemy he was willing to enter ceasefire negotiations. On the same day, German troops re-entered Narvik. The calamitous Norwegian campaign was officially over and the country's bitter years of occupation had begun.

For the Poles, the return journey to France was uneventful but depressing; defeat had been snatched from the jaws of victory. Landing at Brest on 14/15 June, the Poles were rushed to positions south of St Malo. They were unsupported and without artillery or communications. On the following day, the brigade was ordered east to St Malo and Dol; again, there was no support available.

Around one battalion in numbers managed to board French ships evacuating for Britain, while the rest of the Brigade surrendered to the enemy on 18 June at 11:00. Many became prisoners of war, while others returned to their families in France. Those who reached Britain, including Bohusz-Szyszko, were posted to Scotland to help defend the western coast. They became the Podhala_ska Battalion,

the 6th Battalion of the 2nd Rifle Brigade.

In the Norwegian campaign, Poles on land and at sea had fought hard and won several victories, which was to prove vital in sustaining morale as a new Free Polish army under British auspices was born. 'The Pole who left Norway took away with him the sight of the German soldiers abandoning their arms and rifles, of the German soldiers with their hands in surrender above their heads looking terrified,' said the Polish Ministry of Information.

Four years later, back in France and pushing on towards the Low Countries, many of the Poles who fought at Narvik would see similar sights as part of the Allied army of liberation. And while the Free Polish dream was not immediately realised – the country was to suffer the pain of having one despotic regime replaced by another – many Poles today view the Narvik campaign as the first step on a long road that culminated in the fall of communism and Poland's rise as a free and democratic nation. From this perspective, the Highland Brigade had matched Sikorski's expectations—they had led the way and done so with honour •



The Killing Time

Bonny Dundee or Bloody Clavers? JEFFREY JAMES argues the case for a more balanced view of the Scots military commander who led Highlanders to brutal victory at Killiecrankie.



Battle of Killiecrankie 1689, painted by Terence Tenison Cuneo. (Museum of the King's Own Scottish Borderers)

Few Scotsmen have excited hero worship or vilification to the extent of John Graham of Claverhouse, first Viscount Dundee. Known either as 'Bonny Dundee' or 'Bloody Clavers', he is an enigmatic and intriguing figure. To some he is the courageous victor of the battle of Killiecrankie; to others the murderous agent of a repressive government. In his portraits, he appears aloof and arrogant, with just a hint of petulance.

The celebrated 19th century historian, Lord Macaulay, described him as 'rapacious and profane, of violent temper and obdurate heart'. He stated that wherever the Scottish race is settled on the face of the globe, Claverhouse's name is mentioned with a peculiar energy of hatred. More generously, Sir Walter Scott, in his classic 'Tale of Old Mortality', portrays him as having been severe but not without possessing 'higher attributes of undaunted and enterprising valour'. Scott's fictional characterisation of him convincingly depicts a man careless of death himself, while ruthless in inflicting it.

Brutal murder

John Graham of Claverhouse was born in 1648. Royal blood flowed in his veins. His family could claim descent back to Lady Mary Stewart, daughter of King Robert III of Scotland. In 1672, at the age of 24, he volunteered for military service abroad. With the war between Holland and France at its height, he saw almost continuous action over the next five years. He was even reputed to have saved the life of his future adversary, Prince William of Orange, at the bloody battle of Seneffe in 1674, while serving in his Lifeguard. He so distinguished himself during the campaign of 1677 that, on his return to England, Prince William personally recommended him to James, Duke of York – the future King of England. Having gained royal patronage, his military career was assured.

The following year, three independent troops of cavalry were raised in Scotland to counter a growing threat from militant Presbyterians, who were in open rebellion against the government. The captaincy of two of these troops went to the Earls of Airlie and Home. The third was offered to Claverhouse, almost certainly through James' patronage. Given his relatively junior status, this speaks volumes for the favour in which he was held by the Duke at this time. Thus began Claverhouse's association with the Scottish insurgency—an association that would blacken his name in Scotland through to

the present day.

The year of 1679 was a troubled one in Scottish history. On 3 May, Archbishop James Sharp, the controversial and widely distrusted Episcopalian prelate of Scotland, was brutally murdered by a small group of Presbyterian fanatics. The murder of the Archbishop threw Scotland into turmoil. The Episcopalian system, imposed on the Scots by the Anglican establishment, was anathema to those intent on preserving the Presbyterian Kirk. Based on Calvinist theological traditions, Presbyterianism had evolved in Scotland during the previous century. Perceived attempts to subvert it by the introduction of Bishops smacked of Popery, and were bitterly resented. While for most Scots this was just something else to grumble about, for a minority it was a matter to be fiercely resisted—if necessary by force of arms.

Like modern day religious fundamentalists, the extremists sought to create a rigid theocracy based solely on the word of God. They disavowed allegiance to the Crown and considered terrorism and acts of violence to be justified by scripture. The Archbishop's assassins fled into the south-west of Scotland, where they were sure of finding support. The counties of Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway were bastions of militant Presbyterianism. Efforts to suppress illegal open-air gatherings, known as conventicles, had failed to dampen the ardour of these fanatical worshipers. Their congregations, including old folk, women and children, risked brutal treatment at the hands of the government militia if caught. In 'Old Mortality', Sir Walter Scott vividly describes Claverhouse's dragoons, 'raking the country clear o'whigs and roundheads, fanatics and covenanters, and stringing up the offenders like straps o' onions, whenever they are found bearing arms'.

The murder of the Archbishop was the trigger for open conflict. Inflamed by the passionate zeal of their ministers, the insurgents armed themselves with whatever offensive implements came to hand, while placing their trust as much in the Almighty as their weapons. The first clash occurred on Sunday 1 June 1679 at Drumclog near Loudon Hill, south-west of Hamilton. Claverhouse's men, intent on breaking up an illegal gathering, came upon the rebels drawn up, prepared for battle on a boggy hillside. The fighting nucleus of the insurgent army comprised perhaps just 50 ill-provided cavalry, along with another 50 musketeers. Among the



British Grenadier, c1686. (Richard Brooks)

mounted men were ageing veterans of the civil wars armed with sword and pistol. Others made do with poleaxe or mace – weapons from another era. In support were men armed with pitchforks, scythes, cudgels and the like, approximately 150 in number.

Claverhouse's account of the battle describes the rebels drawn up in four battalions of foot, well armed with fusils and pitchforks, supported by three squadrons of cavalry. Over and above the innate religious fanaticism that strengthened their resolve, the cries and lamentations of the women and children strengthened their resolve to fight to the last.

Claverhouse's force, comprising a troop of cavalry plus a company of dragoons, numbered slightly in excess of 100 men in total. The rebels held the terrain advantage, being on a slope fronted by boggy ground. Both sides skirmished across the bog. Claverhouse's dragoons fought dismounted (probably one man in three acted as horse holder). The effect of their fire was to drive the insurgents back on at least two occasions. Then, incited by their ministers and inflamed by the wailing of their womenfolk, the rebels suddenly launched a furious frontal attack across the bog. In the brutal melee

that followed, Claverhouse's horse was mortally wounded by a thrust from a pitchfork. He recounts how it 'made such an opening in his belly that his guts hung out half an ell'. His men were driven back and soon broke in rout.

Claverhouse made good his escape by mounting a loose horse. Superstitious onlookers later claimed they saw bullets recoil from him 'like hailstones from a block of granite'. To the insurgents, the victory seemed to be 'a day of deliverance to the righteous, a day of pouring out of wrath to the persecutors and the ungodly' (Scott). It was however to be both their first and last victory.

Killing time

Claverhouse escaped censure for his defeat at Drumclog, but lost his independent command. His official report states he succeeded in saving his standards and made the best retreat possible, given the disorder his troops were in. He admits to eight or ten cavalymen killed, as well as many more dragoons. His troop of cavalry was absorbed into the Duke of Monmouth's army, which was hurriedly raised to confront the rising. On 20 June 1679, Monmouth occupied Glasgow. Two days later, he decisively defeated the insurgents at Bothwell Bridge.

Claverhouse's cavalry were said to have pursued the fleeing rebels with brutal zeal. Later he was vilified for having instigated the slaughter that followed (some 2000 were killed), but there is no historical evidence for this. Despite assertions that he personally led the pursuit, his name hardly figures in contemporary accounts of the battle.

The aftermath of Bothwell Bridge, known as 'the killing time', is commonly viewed as a protracted period of persecution carried out by the establishment against recalcitrant Presbyterians. In reality, it was a mopping up operation. The defeat at Bothwell Bridge, along with the capture and execution of many of the movement's leaders, took the heart out of the rebellion. The government instigated a policy of religious toleration for all who kept the peace. Only open-air gatherings remained outlawed. Holding such an event remained a capital offence. Indoor worship of all persuasions was tolerated. It was therefore against the extremist die-hards that Claverhouse's sword arm was now directed.

On 16 December 1684, the town of Kirkcudbright was attacked by a large band of militants. Claverhouse's men

caught them on Auchencloy Hill, killed five and took three prisoners. He presided at their trial, where two were found guilty and executed. He then ordered that James Macmichael, one of those killed in the fight, should be disinterred from his grave in Dalry churchyard and hung up as a demonstration that justice had been done, even after death. Macmichael, described as 'a man of bold and hasty temper', was responsible for a number of killings. Claverhouse fought hand to hand with him on Auchencloy Hill, and would have been killed had not one of his own men, 'rush'd upon the rebel and from behind clav'd his skull with a blow'.

Perhaps the most damaging incident, affecting Claverhouse's reputation, occurred in March 1685. On apprehending a suspected insurgent named John Brown, and finding arms and incriminating papers in his house, Claverhouse ordered his execution. He said 'I caused shoot him dead, which he suffered very unconcernedly'. Brown, caught bearing arms and refusing to acknowledge the king, was clearly culpable. Claverhouse, with the powers vested in him, was operating within the letter of the law. The damage to his reputation came less from the fact that Brown was shot, than from an allegation that the execution was heartlessly carried out in front of Brown's wife and children. Another version of the story alleged that Claverhouse and his men taunted and abused the family while the execution was carried out.

Such stories have become the stuff of folk-lore. Lurid accounts of his supposed brutality abound. The 17th century novelist Daniel Defoe even claimed that Claverhouse murdered several rebels with his own hands. However, although he was zealous in rounding up the insurgents, and despite the numerous accusations laid against him, there is no firm evidence that he was cruel for cruelty's sake. As he said himself after the execution of William Bogue in June 1683, 'I am as sorry to see a man die, as any of themselves, but when one dies justly, for his own faults, and may save a hundred to fall in the like, I have no scruple'.

Hunter hunted

In the years leading up to 1688, Claverhouse gained a number of promotions, eventually reaching the rank of Major General. His rise owed much to the patronage of James II, who succeeded to the throne in 1685, and with whom he enjoyed a close association. James valued the Scotsman's martial qualities



Platoon of Colonel Hastings' Regiment, drawn up in three lines, about to deliver fire against Dundee's Highlanders at the battle of Killiecrankie, 1689. Painting by Richard Hook.

and placed his trust in him. Claverhouse was with him in London when William of Orange launched his invasion of England on 5 November 1688. The King's unpopular absolutist policies and openly avowed Catholicism were the catalyst for the invasion and the bloodless coup that followed. Claverhouse remained loyal to James throughout the crisis, urging him to stand his ground and fight. It was a mark of gratitude for his loyalty and leadership that he was raised by James to the peerage as Viscount Dundee, the name by which he is now more generally known.

Fearing capture and unnerved by desertions from his army, James decided on flight. He told Dundee 'there is but a small distance between the prisons and the graves of kings; therefore I go for France immediately'. Dundee is said to have wept in frustration when he learnt of the king's failure of resolve. James left Whitehall for the Continent on 18 December, having promised Dundee a commission to command his troops in Scotland. The two men were never to meet again. The Protestant William of Orange formally accepted the offer of the Crown of England the following

February, and was crowned jointly with his wife Mary, James' daughter, at Westminster Abbey on 11 April 1689.

The rapid collapse in support for James in England was not mirrored in Scotland, where his supporters, known as Jacobites, retained a sizeable following. Jacobite sympathies were strongest in the highlands and along the lowland coastal strip between Aberdeen and Fife—an area of strongly entrenched Episcopalianism. In the spring of 1689, Dundee confided his intention of raising the highland clans for his exiled master to the Duke of Gordon. Dundee sought to emulate his famous relative, the Marquis of Montrose, and exploit the strong bond of loyalty to the House of Stuart that existed among the Highlanders. During the civil wars, earlier in the century, Montrose had won a series of stunning victories for King Charles I against successive Scottish armies. Legend has it that when asked by Gordon which way he would go, Dundee answered 'Wherever the shade of Montrose directs me'.

There was no time to lose, since it soon became clear that his liberty was threatened. The resurgent Presbyterian

faction in Edinburgh, all Williamites, had targeted him for arrest and trial. To avoid capture he rode out of the city on 18 March 1689, accompanied by a handful of loyal followers. News of this reached the authorities in Edinburgh and a summons was sent for his return. It was thought that Dundee was heading for Stirling to set up a rival Jacobite government. The local militia were alerted and all entrances to the town guarded. The magistrates of Stirling were ordered to apprehend and 'to seale the personne of the Lord Dundee'.

Bypassing Stirling, he crossed the Forth at Stirling Bridge and rode on to Dunblane, where he received news of a Jacobite Confederacy of the Clans, raised by Ewen Cameron of Lochiel. Lochiel was renowned for his strength and ferocity. As a young man he had bitten out the throat of a Cromwellian officer in mortal combat. Now 60 years old, he was the very essence of a Highland chieftain, arrogant and proud. But it was one thing to bring the clans together, another to lead them. Clan rivalries militated against one of their own. What was needed was an outsider of sufficient standing and



John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee.



Blair Castle, dating back to the 13th century – a vital strongpoint commanding the road between Inverness and Perth. Dundee's seizure of the castle led to the battle of Killiecrankie. (Jeffrey James)

charisma to energise them into action. Dundee's pedigree and ambition marked him as the man.

A few days later another messenger arrived – this time from the government in Edinburgh, carrying the summons ordering Dundee to lay down his arms and return to Edinburgh. Despite making a reasoned written appeal against the summons, he was declared a fugitive and rebel on 30th March. At last set on his course of action, he marked his defiance on the heights above Dundee, where, dressed in scarlet and flanked by his lifeguard troop, he raised the royal standard above the town. By the time the authorities could react, he was already heading away north-east, following in the steps of Montrose toward the snow clad hills of the Grampians. Now the hunter had become the hunted.

Rebellious Campaign

To counter the Jacobite threat in Scotland, William's Scots Brigade, veterans of the Dutch Wars, embarked from London for Scotland in March 1689. The brigade, 1100 strong, was commanded by General Hugh Mackay, described by a contemporary as 'the plainest man I ever knew, in a military way'. The brigade was reinforced on arrival in Scotland by the Earl of Leven's full strength infantry regiment and a small body of cavalry. Records show that Leven's regiment, better known today as the Kings Own Scottish Borderers, was recruited in Edinburgh within the space of two hours on 18 March 1689 – the very same day Dundee rode from the city.

Dundee's small force was no match for

Mackay, but what it lacked in numbers it made up for in mobility. His first attempt at recruiting ended badly. On 1 May, he met with Coll MacDonald of Keppoch and his force of 700 clansmen. He found Keppoch extorting a ransom from the terrified townsmen of Inverness, while his men busily plundered their neighbours, the Mackintoshes. Dundee chastised Keppoch as 'a common robber and the enemy of mankind', before intervening with the Inverness town clerk to pledge repayment of the ransom once James reclaimed his throne. Though now £2700 richer, Keppoch took his admonishment to heart and turned homeward with his loot, indifferent to Dundee's appeal to follow him.

Having failed at his first attempt to enlist support, and now hard pressed by Mackay's advancing army, Dundee threw caution to the wind and headed back south. On 11 May, he surprised the small garrison of Perth, turning several officers out of their beds and taking prisoners and horses, plus the recently collected tax revenues of the town. There was minimal violence and private property was respected. From Perth, he rode on to Dundee, but found the town barred to him by government forces. Again there was very little fighting, although one of his men was killed spying out the town's defences. Subsequent claims that the town's suburbs were spitefully torched are almost certainly false.

Dundee's raid into the lowlands created a shock wave of anxiety in Edinburgh. The authorities hurriedly ordered the capital to be reinforced with additional soldiers. Others were transported up the

coast to Burntisland, in Fife, to dispute any advance Dundee might attempt on the city. Not until the threat had lifted could an earlier order for 600 men to march north, under the command of Colonel Ramsey, be fulfilled. The plan was for Ramsey's men to link up with Mackay's army at Badenoch on the road between Inverness and Perth. Ramsey's brigade set out from Perth on 22 May, but they did not get far. After three days of marching through hostile country, their resolution failed. Rumours that the clans were out and fears that at any moment they might be ambushed so unnerved the men that Ramsey ordered a return to Perth.

On the 26th, Mackay set out for the rendezvous, unaware that Ramsey was already retracing his steps. It was not until he was half way to Badenoch that the unwelcome news of Ramsey's retreat reached him. The herald also brought disquieting information about Jacobite movements. Dundee had once again taken the field; this time with an army swelled by recruits from the highlands, hungry for booty and attracted to his banner by news of his daring raid on Perth. What at first appeared to have been an inconsequential sortie, proved to be the key to unlocking the fighting resources of the highlands. Dundee's army was now reckoned to be 2000 strong. Along with his own cavalry it included contingents of Glengarry MacDonnells, Camerons, MacDonalds of Clanranald, Keppoch, Appin and Glencoe.

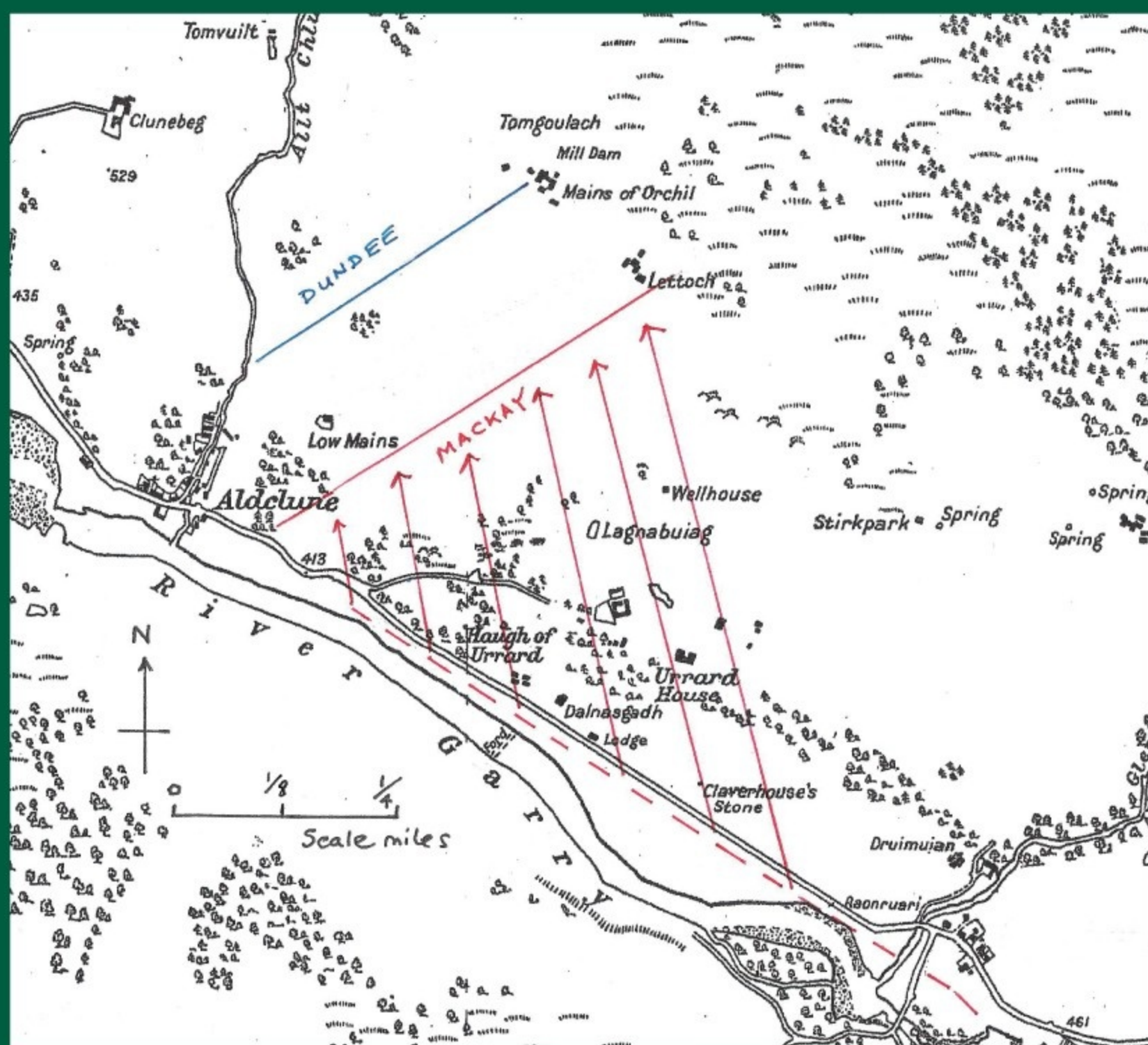
On 29 May, Dundee arrived at Ruthven Castle, strategically situated commanding an important junction of routes through the Cairngorms. Its small garrison quickly surrendered. The castle was then set

ablaze on the orders of Coll MacDonald of Keppoch – the same clan chieftain who had previously given Dundee the cold shoulder at Inverness. Dundee dubbed him ‘Coll of the Cows’ – presumably in recognition of his penchant for rustling cattle. Coll had been outlawed in the reign of James, so enjoyed the dubious distinction of being in rebellion against two kings at the same time.

Mackay was in a difficult situation. His army was just 650 strong, comprising approximately 250 cavalry and dragoons, 200 regular infantry and 200 loyalist highlanders. By 30 May, the two armies were within a few miles of each other. Wisely, Mackay fell back, sending an urgent summons for reinforcements. His retreat lasted four days, with Dundee in close pursuit. However the tables were turned on the morning of 4 June when Mackay was reinforced at Susie Hill, near Edinglassie, by the arrival of Sir James Leslie’s hungry and bedraggled foot regiment, along with 300 weary dragoons. Heedless of demands from the exhausted newcomers for a period of rest, Mackay ordered an immediate advance. He kept his army in a body without throwing out advanced parties, hoping to surprise the Jacobites. But Dundee was already in full retreat, having been warned of the reversal in fortunes by spies in Mackay’s camp.

On 7 June, there was a protracted fight at the hill of Knockbrecht, near Culnakyle, when Mackay’s dragoons came across a party of Maclean Highlanders marching in extended order toward the Jacobite camp. Many of the Highlanders fled at the first onslaught, but 100 or so managed to gain high ground. They stubbornly held off successive attacks before breaking through the enemy lines to safety at dawn the next day. Mackay claimed 80 Macleans were captured. His own losses amounted to the death of a Captain of dragoons along with six troopers.

A prisoner taken by Mackay at this time reported that Dundee was ‘sick of a flux’, and a propagandist newsletter dated 22 June claimed that his ‘unsuccessful rebellious campaign hath reduced his body to a low and wretched state’. His poor health may help to explain the increased occurrence of ill discipline in the Jacobite army. The Highlanders, disorderly at the best of times, fell to plundering indiscriminately. It was perhaps therefore with some relief that the safety of Lochaber was reached and the highland host dispersed to their mountain fastnesses.



Map of the Killiecrankie battlefield, superimposed with the approximate positions of the armies before the battle, and showing Mackay’s method of deploying his six battalions from column of route along the road, into line of battle.

Clash at Killiecrankie

In mid July, Colonel Alexander Cannon arrived at Dundee’s camp from Ireland at the head of 300 men, described as ‘new-raised, naked and undisciplined’. It was a disappointingly far cry from the 5000 originally promised by James. Dundee’s army, comprising battalions of MacDonalds of Clanranald and Sleat, Glengarry MacDonnells, Macleans under Sir John Maclean of Duart, Lochiel’s Camerons, plus contingents of other clans, was just over 2000 strong; much smaller than he would have wished, but its morale was high. It was said that he had ‘gained so upon the affections of his small army [that] though half starved, they moved forward as cheerfully as if they had not felt the least effects of want’. Now once again they were on the march—their objective Blair Castle, a vital strongpoint commanding the road between Inverness and Perth.

They secured the castle on 26 April—only to learn that Mackay’s army, in excess of 3000 strong, was less than a day’s march away at Dunkeld. There were mixed opinions at the council of war. Many of Dundee’s officers were nervous of seeking battle while outnumbered. They hoped more men would yet join them from the wavering clans. However, Cameron of Lochiel

took a different view. He was for fighting now while morale was high. Even in his sixth decade his warlike spirit remained undiminished. Dundee, needing little persuasion to fight, ordered the army to be ready to march out against the enemy at dawn.

By noon the next day, Mackay’s army was at the Pass of Killiecrankie – a few miles south of Blair. The Pass, a forbidding geological feature described in the 19th century as ‘a dark and profound abyss’, could barely be traversed by three men abreast. The rough track wound its way above the plunging course of the River Garry, with precipitous forested slopes rising up on either side. Mackay’s army, comprising six regiments of infantry and two troops of cavalry, cautiously navigated the precarious path. Two battalions of the Scot’s Brigade (Balfour’s and Ramsay’s) led the column, followed by the newly raised men of Lord Kenmure’s regiment. Next was Leven’s regiment, followed by Mackay’s. Bringing up the rear was Hasting’s regiment (first raised in 1685 and later to become famous as the Somerset Light Infantry). The long column, which included 1200 baggage horses, was ripe for ambush. But surprisingly no ambush was attempted. According to tradition, Dundee vetoed the idea. Whatever the truth of it,



The River Garry flowing through the Pass of Killiecrankie, described in the 19th century as ‘a dark and profound abyss.’ (Jeffrey James)



Battlefield of Killiecrankie looking south-east along the lower slopes of the Creag Eallaich Hill, toward Mackay’s right wing. (Jeffrey James)

Mackay’s passage went uncontested – save for a single shot fired by Iain Macrae, a Jacobite sympathiser, which is said to have killed an officer of cavalry outright.

Upon debouching from the Pass into an extensive cornfield near the village of Killiecrankie, Mackay sent out scouts to reconnoitre toward Blair. They returned with disturbing news that parties of Highlanders were approaching from the north. The General rode forward to see for himself and soon discovered the main body of the enemy a mere quarter of a mile away. Concerned his army would be caught unprepared in column beside the rocky riverbank, he quickly galloped back to organise it into line

of battle on more favourable ground. He formed up on a ridge facing north-west, with the slopes of Creag Eallaich Hill stretching away on his right. It was ground described by Mackay as, ‘fair enough to receive the enemy but not to attack them’. Dundee had already gained possession of more commanding ground immediately to Mackay’s front, with the gentle slopes of Lude Hill rising up behind him, securing his retreat toward Blair. Mackay caustically states that the position was consistent with, ‘the ordinary maxim of Highlanders, who never fight against regular forces upon anything of equal terms, without a sure retreat at their back’

Mackay formed his line by half battalions, three ranks deep instead of the normal five or six – presumably to maximise firepower. A deeper formation ensured one fifth of all muskets were loaded and ready to fire at any given time. By reducing his ranks to three, he was therefore taking a calculated risk. If the Highlander’s charge was not halted by musketry, his soldiers would be reliant on their plug bayonets and would be hard pressed to fix them before being overwhelmed.

Mackay’s frontage extended for half a mile. Dundee, although outnumbered, sought to match it by increasing the gaps between his Clan battalions. Mackay placed his two troops of cavalry behind a small gap in the centre of his line, telling them he dare not expose them to the enemy’s cavalry, which was composed, ‘all of gentlemen, reformed officers, or such as had deserted of Dundee’s regiment out of England’. The ordering of the armies, which included some inconsequential

skirmishing, was typical of the period and was time consuming.

It was late afternoon before Mackay’s three light cannon briefly came into action, doing little harm other than to infuriate the impatient Highlanders. After a short while their makeshift carriages broke, rendering them useless. The afternoon wore on. The sun shone obliquely into the eyes of the Highlanders. Tradition has it that when asked which side would win, Cameron of Lochiel replied that victory would go to the side that spilled first blood. Upon hearing this remark, one of his men, presumably squinting to avoid the glare of sunlight, took aim and fired at an officer on a white horse. The officer fell – shot through the heart.

Wild highland charge

Mackay became ever more anxious, knowing that twilight would add to the terrors of the wild highland charge. His fears would be more than justified. Dundee waited to give the order to attack until the sun began to set behind the mountains. He had earlier exchanged his scarlet coat for another of a darker hue to conceal his rank. His battle cry was ‘King James and the Church of Scotland’. An eye witness tells how ‘the sun going down caused the Highlanders to advance on us like madmen, without shoe or stocking, covering themselves from our fire with their targes. At last they cast away their muskets, drew their broadswords, and advanced furiously upon us’.

Dundee’s left wing was the first to charge, careering down the slope and coming under fire at about 100 paces. Many MacDonell’s, Macneils and



The words on the monument at the site of the battle of Drumclog, where Claverhouse’s small force was defeated by the Covenanters.



Viscount Dundee's memorial in the ruined chapel of St Bride's Kirk, in the grounds of Blair Castle. The chapel is the final resting place of Dundee. (Jeffrey James)

Right: Bonny Dundee's breastplate and helmet on display as part of the collection at Blair Castle. The hole shot through the centre was manufactured by the fourth Duke of Atholl to improve its warlike appearance. (Blair Castle, Perthshire)



Camerons fell in this first exchange – but before three volleys could be aimed at them, the Highlanders crashed into Mackay's own regiment and the centremost division of Leven's. With no time to fix their bayonets, and assailed by clansmen wielding battleaxe and broadsword, the government troops at this point buckled and broke. Only Hasting's regiment on the extreme right of the line, and the outer division of Leven's remained intact – possibly because the attackers, veering to their right in charging downhill, bypassed them entirely.

Even more ignominiously, the three regiments on Mackay's left, Balfour's, Ramsay's and Kenmure's, broke and fled immediately – almost before a shot was fired. Mackay later claimed they behaved 'like the vilest cowards in nature'. In a bold attempt to save the day, he ordered his cavalry forward against the exposed inner flank of the Highlanders, only to find that just a handful of troopers would follow him – the rest ran away.

In the circumstances, it is remarkable that as night fell he was able to extricate himself, along with 400 men from the unbroken remnants of Hasting's and Leven's regiments. Falling back in good order and fording the river, they eventually reached safety. He left behind 2000 dead or captured—the

majority slaughtered in the bloody pursuit through the Pass. That others survived is thanks solely to the lure of the baggage and the Highlander's love of booty.

In one famous incident, Donald MacBean, a government soldier, made an improbable leap of 18 feet across the river between two great rocks to avoid a pursuing Highlander. He was one of the lucky ones. Cameron of Lochiel described the scene on the battlefield, saying 'the enemy lay in heaps almost in the order they were posted, but so disfigured with wounds, and so hashed and mangled that even the victors could not look upon the amazing proofs of their own agility and strength without surprise and horror'.

But what of Dundee? That he was killed by a random musket shot at the very commencement of the battle is clearly attested by Mackay in his memoirs. He states, 'Dundee with his horse, wheeling to our right, came upon the battalion of my regiment, by whose fire, according to their own confession, both Dundee, Pitkur, one Ramsey, and others were killed at the first onset'. The tradition that he was targeted by a marksman with a silver bullet from nearby Urrard House is only for the credulous.

Dundee was last seen by his own men galloping forward before being engulfed

in the smoke of battle. He was later found among the dead and dying. His last words were to ask how the day went. 'Well for the king,' he was told, 'but I'm sorry for your Lordship'. Dundee replied before dying, 'tis the less matter for me, seeing the day goes well for my master'.

Dundee's body was taken back to Blair Castle, and later interred in a vault at nearby St Bride's Kirk. Mackay was at Blair the following September and viewed the corpse while it still lay open to view. He states that the musket ball that killed Dundee entered his brain through his left eye. If so, it is quite likely he was dead before his body hit the ground—his famous last words never really spoken.

A month after Killiecrankie, the Highlanders were soundly beaten at Dunkeld by the newly raised Earl of Angus's Regiment—nicknamed the Cameronians after a former terrorist. Its ranks were filled with fervent Presbyterians. The regiment was commanded by William Cleland – an old adversary of Dundee's and a veteran of Drumclog. The following year the Jacobite rising in Scotland was finally crushed when Williamite cavalry overran and slaughtered the last Highlanders still resolved to fight at the Haughs of Cromdale. Two months later, James was decisively defeated in Ireland at the Boyne. He never regained the crown •



German infantry marching past a Russian Orthodox Church. General Harpe's Army Group North Ukraine numbered over half a million men.

HITLER'S UKRAINIANS

When Stalin's Red Army rolled into western Ukraine, ANTHONY TUCKER-JONES reveals they found themselves up against Hitler's tough SS Ukrainian recruits.

It was at Cherkassy that the last of Adolf Hitler's offensive strength in Nazi-occupied Ukraine was bled dry in early 1944—creating the conditions for Joseph Stalin's victorious advances into Byelorussia, Poland, Romania and the Balkans in the summer and autumn of 1944. During the end of the previous year, the Red Army had fought to liberate the Ukraine west of the Dnepr. Stalin's breakthrough southwest of the Ukrainian capital, Kiev, forced Hitler's 4th Panzer Army back over 100 miles, exposing his 8th Army's right flank. The latter was dangerously vulnerable because it remained with a foothold on the southern banks of the Dnepr and it was not long before Stalin attempted to surround it.

Crack Ukrainian SS

The Red Army's second attempt at

cutting off the Cherkassy or Korsun pocket succeeded on 3 February 1944 when the 1st and 2nd Ukrainian Fronts linked up near Zvenigorodka, trapping 56,000 men. A rescue attempt quickly bogged down and in the bitter fighting that followed, the Germans lost 28,000 killed or captured. Moscow claimed the battle for the pocket cost Hitler a total of 55,000 killed or wounded and 18,200 captured. The Germans maintained that 30,000 men managed to escape.

Following the utter destruction of Hitler's Army Group Centre in Byelorussia in June 1944, Stalin instructed Marshal Georgi Zhukov to coordinate his next massive counter offensive to be conducted by Marshal IS Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front. Zhukov, however, advocated strengthening Marshal Aleksandr Vasilevsky's northern group of fronts with an aim of cutting off Hitler's

Army Group North and occupying Nazi East Prussia.

'Are you in cahoots with Vasilevsky?' queried Stalin. 'Because he also asks for his fronts to be reinforced.'

'We are not,' replied Zhukov, 'but if that is his opinion, he is correct.'

'The Germans will fight for East Prussia till the very end,' warned Stalin, 'and we may get stuck there. We should first of all liberate the Lvov Region and the eastern part of Poland.'

Zhukov later recalled: 'I thought it expedient to allot some of the forces of the 1st Ukrainian Front to strike at East Prussia. For some reason, however, the Supreme Commander was against it.'

Zhukov was highly dismissive of the intelligence effort for the offensive toward the Polish city of Lvov, perhaps still smarting that Stalin had thrown away the chance to take Prussia, observing:

‘When the preparations were being made for the operation on the Lvov sector, the intelligence agencies of the 1st Ukrainian Front failed to disclose the enemy’s entire defence system and to locate the operational reserves of the German High Command, first of all its armoured troops. The result was that the Front Command could not foresee the possible counter manoeuvre by the enemy when his defence was penetrated. Artillery preparation and air support was poorly planned due to inadequate study of the enemy fire layout.’

Sitting in Konev’s path ready to counter attack were some 20,000 crack Ukrainian SS troops who had thrown their lot in with Hitler. Many Ukrainians hoped they would gain independence from Moscow by helping Hitler’s war machine. Nonetheless, the Ukrainian Liberation Army (Ukrainske Vyzvolne Viysko—UVV) was little more than a Nazi propaganda tool and two Ukrainian divisions numbering 40,000 men designated the Ukrainian National Army (UNA) in 1945 was never really effective as such.

In the meantime, about 180,000 Ukrainian volunteers served the Wehrmacht. Some 70,000 were recruited into the German Schuma or Police, with 35,000 serving in 71 Schuma battalions, which included some Cossack forces, conducting anti-partisan and other security duties. Also the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Ukrains’ka Povstans’ka Armiia – UPA) created in 1944 fought both the Russian and the German armies.

Significantly, Ukrainians proved eager recruits for a Waffen-SS division. These though were largely Galician Ukrainians, as Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler stipulated they must come from western Ukraine (formerly Polish Galicia) and be Greek Catholic rather than Russian Orthodox, thereby barring Soviet Ukrainians. The idea was that anti-communist volunteers would be drawn from the area of Poland that had once been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and therefore loyal servants of the Habsburg Emperor. Himmler, a Catholic himself, permitted these Ukrainian volunteers to have their own chaplains—a rare concession and unheard of in other SS units.

When recruitment commenced in April 1943, there were a staggering 100,000 applicants for 30,000 places (typically, a Waffen-SS division numbered about 15,000 fighting men and 5,000 support troops). Many of the others were not turned away and were recruited to form

five Galician police regiments. Himmler placed an Austrian Major-General, the elderly and professorial looking Fritz Freitag, in charge. About 350 Galician volunteer officers and 2,000 NCOs were despatched to Germany. After their training was completed in May 1944, the 14th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division Galizien was shipped to the Eastern Front just in time to face Konev’s Lvov-Sandomierz offensive.

Violent city

Stalin had occupied Lvov in September 1939, in accordance with the secret provisions of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. After Hitler’s invasion of the Soviet Union, it was discovered that Stalin’s secret police had massacred thousands of prisoners, many of them Ukrainian nationalists. The Jews of Lvov also suffered at the hands of the Nazis and Ukrainian nationalists, who felt the region should belong to Ukraine not Poland. The Germans claimed the city’s Jewish population had helped with the massacres and in the pogroms that followed, Ukrainian partisans supported by the German authorities killed about 4,000 Jews.

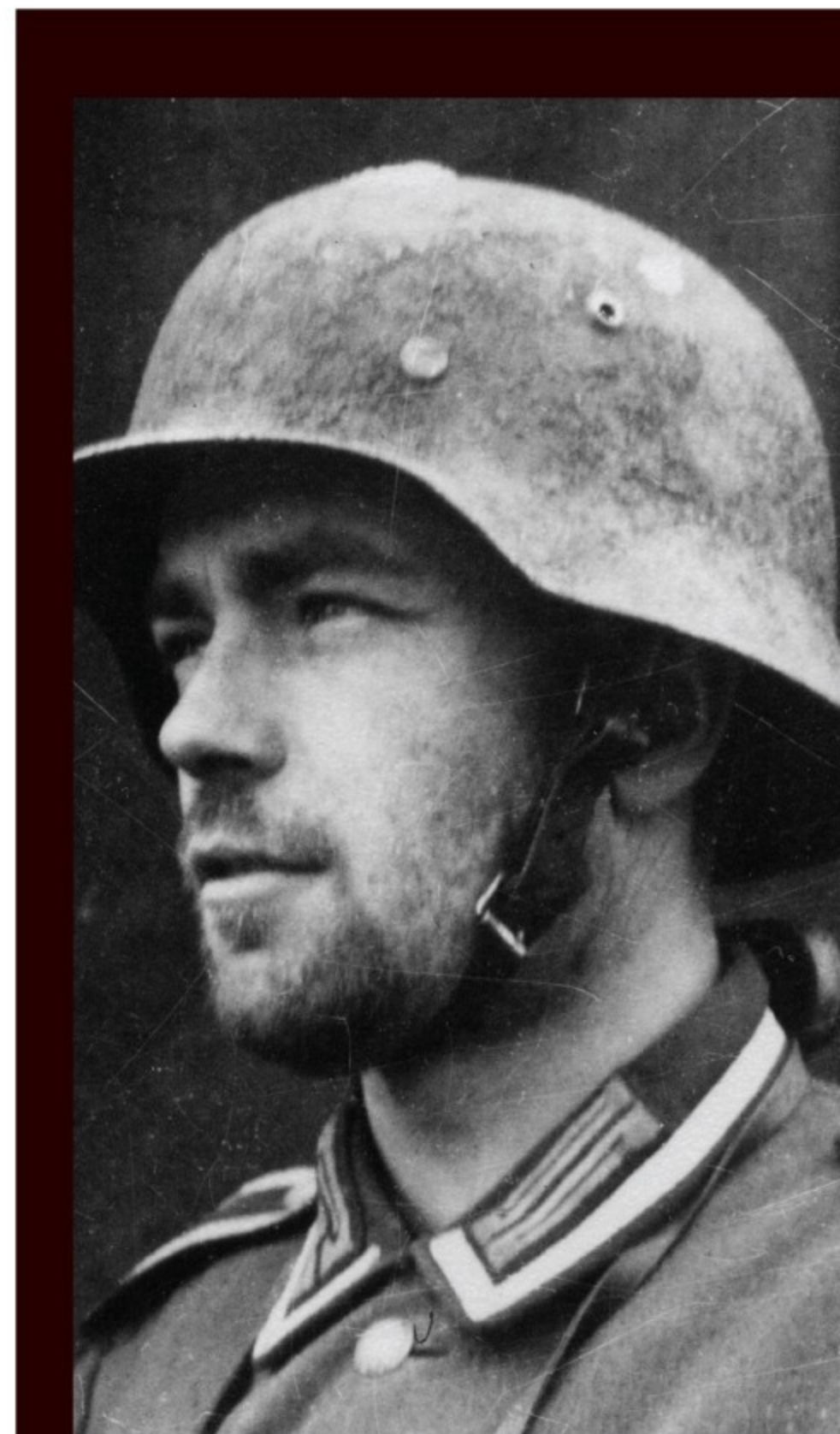
This violent city was a key military communications hub, acting as an important road and rail junction. Indeed, after Hitler was driven from much of Ukraine during the first half of 1944, Lvov became of great importance to him as a focal point between his forces in Poland and those in Romania. It provided the shortest route to the upper Vistula, particularly the Nazis vital Silesian industrial region. It also protected the Polish oilfields in the region of Berislaw and Drohobycz.

The Lvov area provided ideal protection against the Red Army, being shielded by the tributaries of the Dniester, the surrounding geography of high ground divided by parallel valleys was ideal for defensive positions. However, the key tributaries were not considerable obstacles; the Zlata Lipa and Gnila Lipa could be outflanked to the north by advancing along the Dubno-Brody-Busk-Lvov highway. The region between Brody and Zolochiv had a series of heights that Hitler had fortified with a system of trenches, pillboxes and minefields.

History has a way of repeating itself and in 1914 the fate of Lvov had been settled with two battles, one on the Zlata Lipa and the other on the Gnila Lipa. The Russian Army’s left wing had played the decisive role against the Austro-Hungarian forces, the Russian

right, though, had not extended itself far enough and the opportunity to trap the 3rd and 4th Austro-Hungarian armies was lost. This meant that the Austro-Hungarians although defeated to the east of Lvov were able to give battle again to the west. No doubt Konev took this valuable lesson onboard.

Hitler’s defences in 1944 were vastly stronger than the Austro-Hungarian field works of 1914. His troops were firmly entrenched east of the Western Bug and



Ukrainians fought in German uniform in the Waffen-SS, security police, Ukrainian Liberation Army and Ukrainian Insurgent Army. However, the SS only recruited Galician or Polish Ukrainians.

everywhere between Brody and Vladimir Volynsk. Konev planned to cut his way through Hitler’s lines in the region of Zolochiv, which would provide the tactical breach, while the strategic line of attack would be to the north toward Kamenka and Rava Russkaya.

Stalin and Konev’s Lvov-Sandomierz offensive was an unusual operation in that it was the only time during the war that a single Soviet Front was tasked with destroying a whole German Army Group largely unassisted. Nonetheless, Konev’s forces were greatly strengthened: he mustered seven tank corps, three mechanised corps, six cavalry divisions

and seventy-two rifle divisions. These units numbered well over a million men, equipped with 1,600 tanks and assault guns, 14,000 guns and mortars and 2,806 combat aircraft from General S.A Krasovsky's 2nd Air Army.

North of Lvov, the 3rd Guards and 13th armies, 1st Guards Tank Army and General VK Baranov's mechanised cavalry corps were to strike in the direction of Rava-Russkaya and 4th Panzer Army. In the south, the 60th and 38th armies, plus the 3rd Guards and 4th tank armies and General SV Sokolov's mechanised cavalry group were to push on Lvov cutting their way through 1st Panzer Army. Even further south, the 1st Guards and 18th armies, with the 5th Guards Army following up, were to attack the weak Hungarian 1st Army guarding the approaches to Stanislav. Further north beyond Konev's Front, lay elements of General Konstantin Rokossovsky's 1st Byelorussian Front, which had not been committed to Bagration and would attack 56th Panzer Corps.

According to Stalin's intelligence, Army Group North Ukraine consisted of 34 infantry divisions, one motorised and five panzer divisions and two infantry brigades. This totalled 600,000 men plus another 300,000 in logistical units, with 900 panzers and assault guns and 6,300 field guns and mortars. The Group's other assets included 700 aircraft of Luftflotte 4, in particular the veteran 8th Fliegerkorps, although they did



Ukrainians also served in German-raised security battalions and were issued with Polizei green or Wehrmacht field grey uniforms – to the Red Army they were all traitors with a death sentence hanging over their heads.

not have direct control of them. The Soviets assessed that at the approaches to the Vistula and Carpathians, German defences had been constructed to a depth of almost 30 miles.

Deception plans

General Josef Harpe had only just assumed command of Army Group North Ukraine on 28 June. Throughout the summer, this army group had been able to match the 1st Ukrainian Front, but the drain of units caused by Stalin's Operation Bagration ensured that the balance was in the Soviets' favour. In the desperate and fruitless attempt to save Army Group Centre, Hitler had been stripped it of six divisions including three panzer from the western regions of the Ukraine.

Major General FW von Mellenthin, Chief of Staff for the 48th Panzer Corps recalled: 'By 13 July the Russians had taken Vilnius and Pinsk, and had reached the outskirts of Kovno and Grodno. They were within a hundred miles of the German frontier, and there was a very real danger of their breaking through into East Prussia as a result of their victory and our absence of reserves. This was the moment chosen by Marshal Konev to launch the new offensive in Galicia.'

In fact, despite Soviet Intelligence, Harpe's command had created three main defensive belts that were only 19 miles deep. In addition, the towns of Valdimir Volynskiy, Brody, Zolochov, Rava Russkaya and Stanislav had been turned into fortified strongpoints. The 3rd Panzer Corps was deployed from

Lvov to Brody to the northeast, which was expected to be the main Soviet line of attack. The area east of Lvov, the sector where the main attack thrust was expected, was mined with 160,000 anti personnel and 200,000 anti tank mines.

Konev tried to convince Harpe that his main attack would fall way to south of the city rather than on it. Indeed, Harpe's intelligence did not notice the Soviet 1st Guards Tank Army moving north. Konev's deception plans made it appear he had a major strike group on his left flank poised to thrust toward Stanislav rather than toward Lvov and Rava Russkaya. Opposite Stanislav, he simulated the concentration of a tank army and a tank corps behind the 1st Guards Army and a tank army behind the 18th Army. These efforts included 453 fake tanks and 568 fake guns, 30 mock-up field kitchens and six dummy fuel points.

While Harpe's intelligence spotted the dummy assembly areas behind the 1st Guards Army and 18th Army, they did not detect the regrouping of some army-size units from the left flank. General von Mellenthin with 48th Panzer Corps lying before Lvov noted: 'Wireless intercept and interrogation of prisoners produced most contradictory reports... Only second rate Russian formations were identified in the front line...' The 48th Panzer Corps did not detect the 38th Army's shift north opposite its sector in front of Lvov as the 1st Ukrainian Front's first echelon until two days before the attack.

Nonetheless, Harpe anticipating Konev's offensive and the preceding metal deluge began to withdraw his troops out



Not all Ukrainians were prepared to support Hitler against Stalin – the fate of a Ukrainian partisan.



General Harpe's Army Group created three main defensive belts in western Ukraine nineteen miles deep.

of harms way. In response Konev decided to go without a full preliminary barrage and attacked on 13 July with the 3rd Guards Army and 13th Army north of Lvov against 13th Corps. He had massed a devastating 240 guns and mortars per kilometre. Unlike Bagration this time the German defenders received air and artillery support.

Great onslaught

Konev's attack opened with General VN Gordov's 3rd Guards Army and General NP Pukhov's 13th Army launching their troops toward Soka, Radekhov, Rava Russkaya and Lublin respectively. The main assault with 38th and 60th armies toward Lvov via Zolochov commenced the following day.

Evgeni Bessonov, a member of the 1st Motor Rifle battalion riding with the 56th Tank Regiment witnessed the opening bombardment: 'At dawn on 14 July 1944, after an extensive artillery barrage and numerous air strikes, the infantry's offensive operation began; the goal was to break through the strongly fortified German defences. On 17 July, after breaking through the German positions, our 4th Tank Army entered the gap with the mission to penetrate deep into the enemy's rear in the direction of Lvov.'

Stalin's resources staggered von Mellenthin, who recorded: 'At 0820 on 14 July the great onslaught began. The Red Army employed masses of material on a scale never known before; in particular they flung in thousands of aircraft and for the first time in the war enjoyed unquestioned command of the air. The

preliminary bombardment lasted an hour but was very violent; it was followed by concentrated attacks in two sectors. By 0930 it was clear that two of our infantry divisions had been hit very heavily and would be incapable of mastering the situation on their own, so we asked for the 1st and 8th Panzer Divisions to counterattack.'

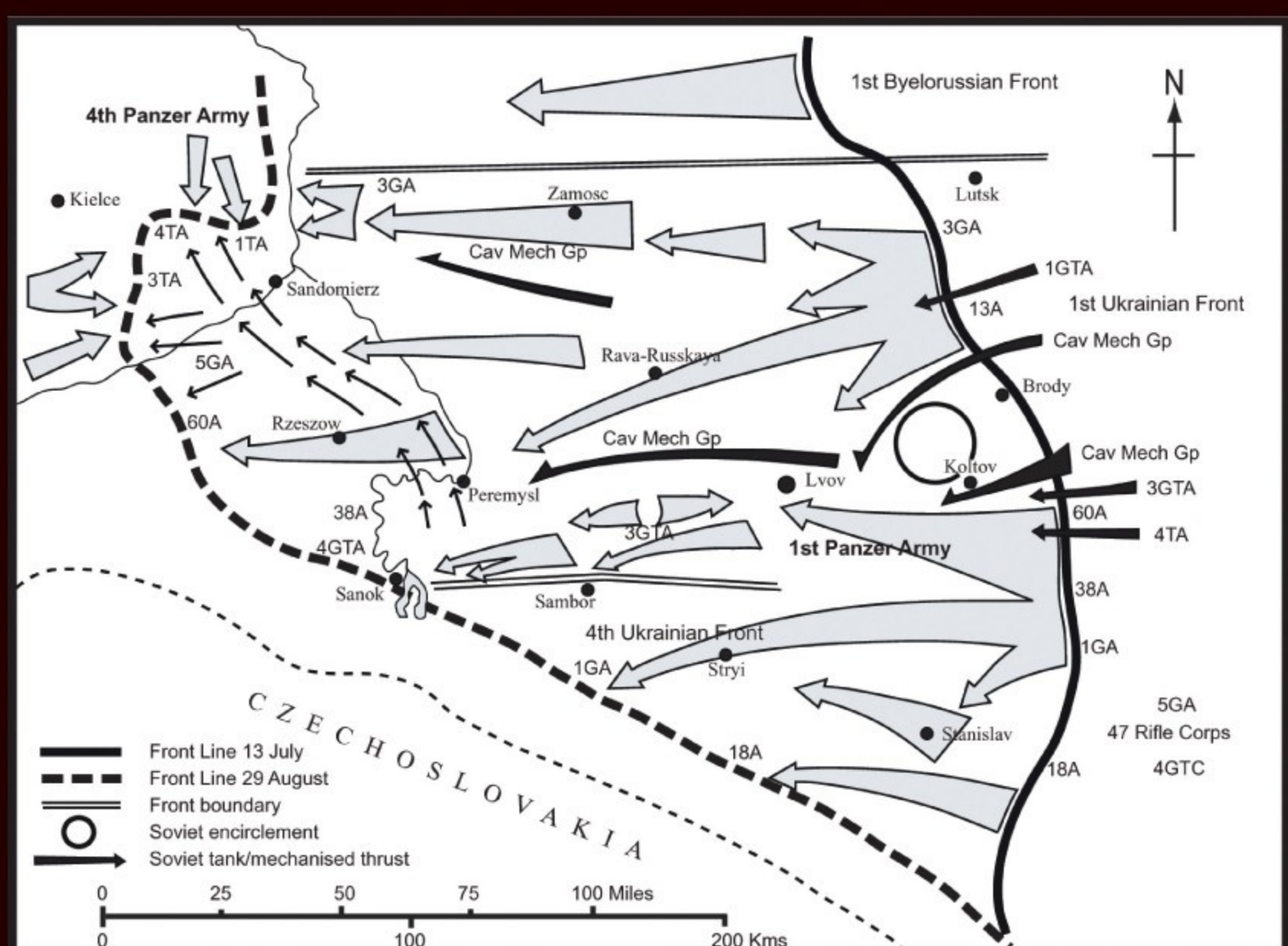
Zhukov, ever at the forefront of things, ensured that he was not far from the action: 'I set up my command post in the area of Lutsk so that I could be closer to the Kovel grouping of the 1st

Byelorussian Front and to the troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front.'

Resistance by 1st and 4th Panzer Armies was much better than that conducted by Army Group Centre's shattered armies. Konev threw his tanks in a two pronged attack. The right forced its way across the Bug and headed north for Rokossovsky's planned push on Lublin and the Vistula, but panzer and SS divisions initially held up his left as it fought its way south toward Lvov.

The northern attack ran into the prepared positions of the weak 291st and 340th Infantry Divisions, but these were easily penetrated. To the northwest into the gap either side of Radekhov, Konev poured Cavalry-Mechanised Group Baranov and the 1st Guards Tank Army. It took 13th Army two days of tough fighting to surround Brody. To the south the Soviets hit the 349th and 357th Infantry Divisions. The former disintegrated and it was only through the action of the latter and Korps Abteilunbg C that the Soviet breakthrough was restricted. But this did not prevent a wedge being driven between 13th Corps and 48th Panzer Corps.

With his defences east of Lvov just about holding, Harpe decided to commit his tactical reserves the 1st and 8th Panzer Divisions in an attempt to stifle the Soviet offensive on 14 and 15 July. Although Konev had been ordered by Stalin to hold back the 3rd Guards and 4th Guards Tank armies until a deep penetration had been made, he knew he must act



L'VOV-SANDOMIERZ OFFENSIVE, JULY - AUGUST 1944



When recruitment started for the Ukrainian Waffen-SS Grenadier Division, 100,000 volunteers came forward.

quickly to exploit the situation.

After some fierce fighting, 1st Panzer Army successfully brought the Soviets to a halt at Oleyov on the 15th. The Germans also counterattacked 38th Army south of Zolochiv, which lay east of Lvov. Unfortunately instead of striking eastward along a previously arranged route, 8th Panzer swung south on the Zlochiv-Jezierna road. General Balck had forbidden troop movements along this route for fear of the Red Air Force. His fears were realised when fighter-bombers swooped and reduced 8th Panzers' columns to blazing wrecks.

Nikolai Zheleznov, serving with the 63rd Brigade, 4th Tank Army says: 'Our corps was sent to exploit the breakthrough. We marched towards Lvov, not encountering any resistance. When we liberated the town of Zolochiv [southwest of Brody], the corps commander replaced the 61st Brigade, marching in the vanguard, with our 63rd Brigade. The brigade commander assembled us and said: "Lieutenant Kriukov's platoon will form the forward detachment, Lieutenant Poligenki's platoon will be on the right flank, and Zheleznov's on my left".'

Konev had trouble bringing his tank armies to bear in the Lvov attack

because the 15th Infantry Corps from 60th Army had only managed to hack a two and a half to four mile wide corridor to a depth of eleven miles. General PS Rybalko commander of the 3rd Guards Tank Army took the decision to shove his men down this corridor on the 16th and was followed up by General DD Lelyushenko's 4th Tank Army.

Armour piercing

This was the only time during the war that two entire tank armies were committed to combat on such a narrow front and while the flanks were being counter-attacked. With German artillery bombarding this 'Koltiv Corridor', the 1st and 8th Panzer Divisions prepared to counter-attack supported by Freitag's Ukrainian 14th SS.

Once Rybalko's men were in the corridor, General Arthur Hauffe's German 13th Corps knew it must withdraw and fell back to the Prinz Eugen Stellung defensive position. By the 17th, the Soviets had captured parts of this strongpoint, which Freitag's Galician Ukrainians attempted to recapture until the appearance of powerful Soviet IS-2 tanks. The gamble paid off and, on the evening of 18 July, the 1st Ukrainian Front cut through

Harpe's defences to a width of 125 miles, advanced 30 to 50 miles and surrounded 45,000 men near Brody. Despite pleas to General Hauffe by his subordinates, there was little he could do to help the four divisions in the Brody salient escape.

The battle was soon joined at a village seven and a half miles from Zolochiv. Zheleznov deployed his armour defensively along the edge of a forest 400 metres from the village to meet an oncoming German column. Taking up the story he recounts: 'There were motorcycles and three Panthers in the forward detachment of the column. I said on the radio: "The first one's mine. Kozlov, yours is the second one. Tikhonov, take the third one." After letting them close to about 600 metres, we fired on my command. The tanks burst into flames and our infantry and artillery eliminated the motorcyclists. Then the German column deployed, and it turned out that it had no less than 20 tanks! They pulled back to the village and started shooting at us and I ordered a retreat. I said to my driver, Petukhov: "Kolia, let's go right." He turned, and then an armour piercing round slammed into the gearbox. It got jammed, and our fuel tank broke open. The tank started burning. I managed to yell: "Guys, bail



Despite the smiles for the camera, Hitler's occupation of Ukraine was barbaric and alienated many sections of the population.

out!" Thank god, everyone got out.'

When his brigade entered Lvov, Zheleznov lost his replacement tank and again narrowly missed being burned. East of Lvov, the Zolochiv bastion fell on the 17th and despite a counterattack by the panzers from 1st Panzer Army the Germans were unable to capture it. The German divisions at Brody to the north were unable to retake Zolochiv or hold on to Brody.

The Soviet 4th Tank Army's advance did not go uncontested. 'We were hit hard during the march to Lvov,' said Bessonov, 'especially by the Luftwaffe, which never stopped strafing our column, trying to slow down our advance.' These attacks normally consisted of 20 to 25 German bombers supported by fighters. Bessonov adds: 'First they all dropped their bombs, aiming for the tanks and simultaneously fired the large calibre machine guns, trying to set them on fire. The planes attacked twice or three times.'

The infantry pressed on while the tanks took shelter catching up at night. There was bitter fighting on the 18th around Bobrka south of Lvov, which was defended by German Panther tanks. Bessonov's column lost its lead tank and suffered heavy casualties and the men

were given a stark choice—advance or be executed. Luckily, the Germans fled, abandoning a Panther that had run out of fuel. Bessonov felt bad that he had forced his men to attack but what else could he do and was relieved that they did not hold it against him.

By nightfall of the 15th, the Rava Russkaya attack had managed about nine miles in the face of heavy fighting. It was soon developed when Baronov's cavalry corps and General MY Katukov's 1st Guards Tank Army poured into the breach on the 16th and 17th both toward Yaroslav and behind Brody.

On 16 July, with the Red Army slicing through between Brody and Zolochiv, Harpe expected them to push south toward the Zalata Lipa. Instead, the following day they struck north along the banks of the Styr pushing through Gorohov and Radziehov while Soviet tanks drove on Busk and cavalry reached Kamenka crossing the Western Bug north of Lvov.

Do or die

Konev's troops took not only Busk to the northeast of Lvov on the 18th, but also the junction at Krasnoe, some 30 miles southwest of Brody and the same distance east of Lvov. On the 19th, the panzers

escaped to the southwest via Gologura to Peremyshlyany; the infantry were not so lucky. Four infantry and one security division were trapped east of Brody between the town and the headwaters of the Styr. Also the Soviets got over the western Bug and entered Poland.

The following day, 4th Fourth Panzer Army committed the 16th Panzer Division and the 20th Motorized and 168th Infantry Divisions in the vicinity of Zholkov to block the 1st Guards Tank Army's advance toward Lvov. But meeting no serious resistance, the latter continued west and did not turn south where the Germans were waiting. By the end of the day, its forward detachment had advanced to a depth of 19 to 25 miles and was approaching Rava Russkaya.

The 48th and 24th Panzer Corps attempted to reach 13th Corps but to no avail. On the 18th, von Mellenthin, taking command of 8th Panzer, tried to cut his way through to the trapped men of 13th Corps at Brody. The Soviets were waiting for him with minefields and concentrated artillery and tank fire. Mellenthin remembers: 'Two days later the bulk of 13th Corps, led by Generals Lasch and Lange, succeeded in fighting their way through to our



When Hitler's forces rolled into Ukraine in June 1941, some locals greeted them as liberators. Hitler, however, had no intention of granting the Ukrainians independence.

lines. Thousands of men formed up in the night in a solid mass and to the accompaniment of thunderous "hurrahs" threw themselves at the enemy. The impact of a great block of desperate men, determined to do or die, smashed through the Russian line, and thus a great many of the troops were saved. But all guns and heavy weapons had to be abandoned, and a huge gap was opened in the front. Marshal Konev's tanks poured through and the whole German position in southern



The 14th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division Galizien shipped to the front in May 1944, just in time to meet the Red Army's Lvov-Sandomierz offensive.

Galicia became untenable."

Those forces remaining in the Brody pocket resisted for four miserable days until it was cut in half and they were finally wiped out on the 22nd. The Germans suffered 30,000 killed and 15,000 captured, as well as losing 68 panzers, 500 guns and 3,500 lorries.

Some 14,000 men of Freitag's 14th SS Division were caught in the Brody area and just 2,000-3,000 managed to escape. Those caught could expect little leniency from their captors. Despite the severe mauling of his untested division, there was no doubting Freitag's courage and he was decorated with the Knight's Cross. His exhausted survivors were sent to Slovakia to refit and the division was rebuilt using Soviet Ukrainians, which was reflected in its re-designation to 14th SS Grenadier Division (ukrainische Nr.1). They were not redeployed until 1945 and then fought in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

Five days after the offensive started, Konev had cut a breach in Harpe's 156 miles wide by 60 to 90 miles deep and had routed 4th Panzer Army and 17th Army. The 13th Army, 1st Guards Tank Army and General Baranov's mechanised cavalry group reached the San River on 29 July and secured bridgeheads on its western banks near Yaroslav.

Bogged down

Hitler was violently distracted from the Eastern and Western Fronts on the 20th when plotters attempted to kill him at his headquarters near Rastenburg (K_tryzn, Poland) in East Prussia called the Wolfsschanz or Wolf's Lair. Although four people were killed and five injured as a result of the bombing, Hitler survived

with only minor injuries. He spent the following weeks tracking down the conspirators, in total some 5,000 people were arrested and 200 executed.

The following day, in a fine example of understatement, General Heinz Guderian recalled: 'When I was compelled to assume the duties of Chief of the General Staff, on 21 July 1944, the situation on the Eastern Front was far from satisfactory.' Only Army Group South Ukraine was in a reasonable situation, while Army Groups Centre and North Ukraine were in complete disarray. As a result of the disaster that had engulfed Army Group Centre, Army Group North had withdrawn to a line Mitau-Dünaburg-Pleskau.

In agreement with General Wenck, Army Group South Ukraine's Chief of Staff, Guderian proposed to Hitler that all those divisions that could be spared from Romania be sent north to plug the gap between army groups Centre and North. In the meantime, at Lvov, the Germans put on a desperate show of strength in an attempt to thwart the 3rd Guards and 4th Tank armies ambitions on 19-20 July. The 3rd Guards swung north and in three days covered 75 miles and were in the Yavorov area and then moved in two directions toward Lvov and southwest toward Przemyśl.

After the capture of Rava Russkaya on the 23rd, Konev moved to sweep north



The Ukrainian city of Lvov was liberated on 27 July 1944 after bitter street fighting.

of Lvov. He had hoped to quickly seize the city and press on, but Rybalko's 3rd Tank Army became bogged down. Harpe had also reinforced the city with several infantry divisions. Konev's main concern now was that Harpe must not be given breathing space in which to further prepare his defences along the San River. At this crucial moment, the 3rd and 4th Guards were freed up by the arrival of rifle divisions following the destruction of the Brody pocket on 22 July.

While the bulk of the German units withdrew from Lvov on 17 July, the presence of large numbers of German troops still in the area made the Polish Home Army postpone its rising in the city. Only when the Soviet 29th Tank Brigade of the 4th Tank Army rumbled up to the city's limits on 23 July, did the Poles rise up as part of Operation Tempest, the national Polish insurrection.

Bessonov was ordered to gain a foothold in Lvov with just two platoons: 'We approached Lvov from the south, not from the east; the enemy did not expect us there and there were almost no German troops in the area. To be honest, I was afraid to enter the city without armour support. I did not like to assault or advance without tanks. Tanks always meant additional courage for us and additional fear for the enemy.

We supported each other in battle, especially in built up areas and forests.'

Bessonov and his men infiltrated the outskirts of the city supported by a 45mm gun with just five rounds and dug in. It was not until late on the 25th or 26th that they were reinforced by the 10th Guards Tank Corps. The Polish Home Army had quickly overwhelmed the token German forces and secured the city; in the city centre the partisans were aided by the arrival of Soviet tanks. Unfortunately, the NKVD quickly moved into the city and the Poles were disarmed and forcibly conscripted into the Red Army or sent to the Gulag. The NKVD then turned its attention on those known Ukrainian nationalists who had not fled.

The remaining Lvov garrison had no intention of being trapped and on the night of the 26th successfully broke out. It took the Soviets the following day to clear out the rearguard and bitter street fighting raged for 72 hours before Lvov was finally liberated on 27 July. About half of the 40,000 German troops in and around Lvov were killed or captured.

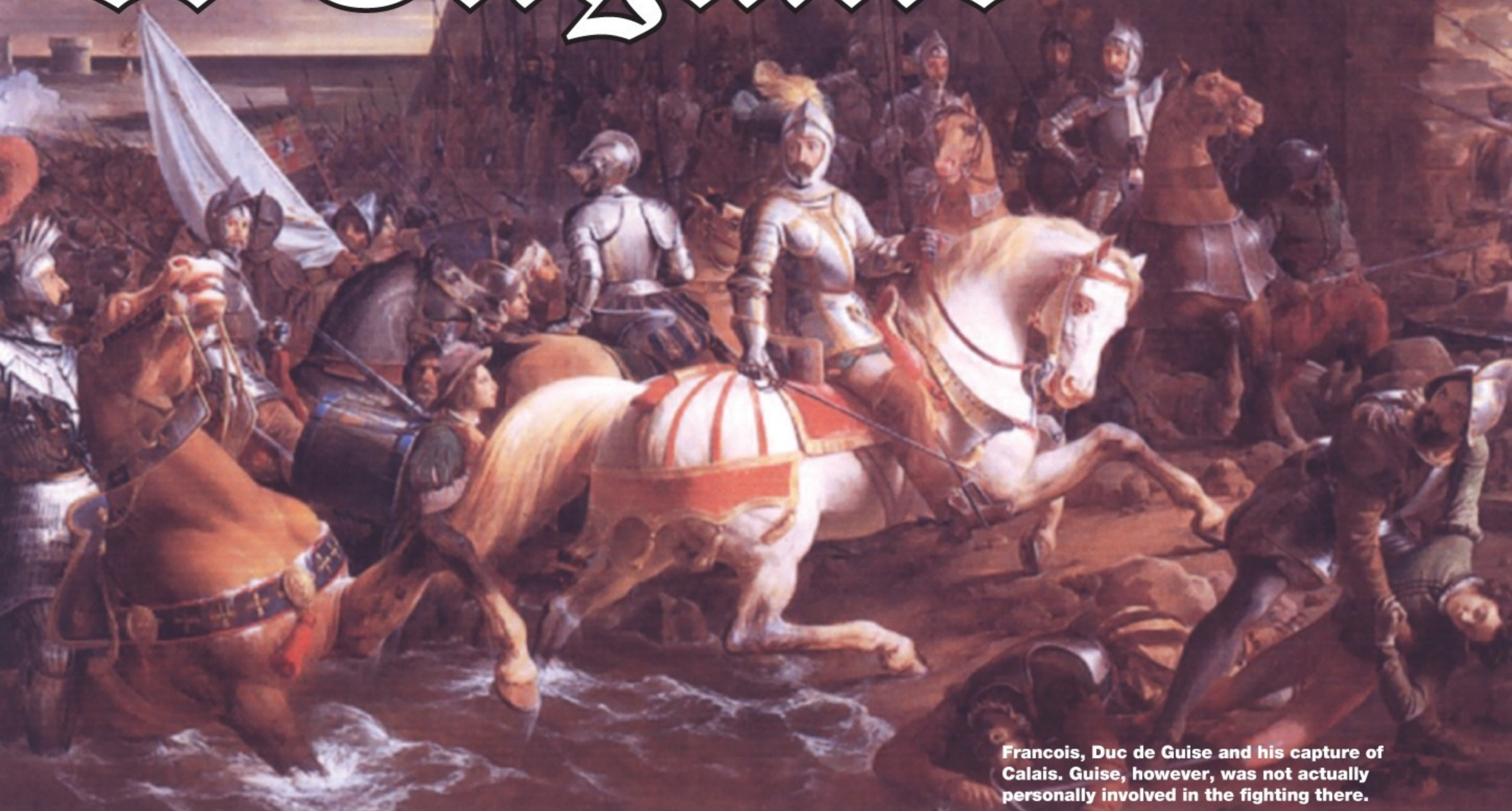
Przemysl also fell that day to the 3rd Guards and the Red Army's seemingly unstoppable streamroller took Stanislaw in the Carpathian foothills, Bialystock in northern Poland, Dvinsk in Latvia and the Siauliai Rai junction between Riga and East Prussia. The 4th Panzer Army fell back on the Vistula and the

Intensive fighting

Soviet soldier Evgeni Bessonov, a tank rider with the 56th Tank Regiment, recalled: 'In early July 1944 our battalion along with the other battalions of the 49th Kamenets-Podolsk Mechanised Brigade, marched on foot towards the front line, to the concentration area, from which we were supposed to go over to the offensive. Intensive fighting was ahead of us. We only marched in darkness and till dawn; in daytime we stayed in forests and groves, taking camouflage measures. By night the road to the front turned into a mighty stream of troops of all branches of service: infantry, artillery of all calibres, armoured personnel carriers. Tanks drove on other roads in order to confuse the enemy. Camouflage and concealment requirements were strictly followed, all soldiers understood its necessity – otherwise we would have been bombed.'

1st Panzer Army retreated southwest to the Carpathians. Stalin issued figures for Hitler's losses during the first month of the Soviet offensive operations on 25 July: 381,000 dead, 158,000 captured, 2,735 tanks and assault guns, 8,702 guns and 57,000 motor vehicles. Any dreams of Ukrainian independence was swept away along with Hitler's armies •

A little piece of England



Francois, Duc de Guise and his capture of Calais. Guise, however, was not actually personally involved in the fighting there.

For two centuries, Calais was a little piece of England in France—but then a French army appeared outside its walls. What happened next became a national scandal. JOHN BARRATT discovers who was to blame.

As she lay dying in November 1558, England's Queen Mary Tudor sighed bitterly: 'When I am dead and opened, you shall find Calais lying on my heart'. The loss of Calais, England's last outpost in France, in January 1558, was a national humiliation rivalling the fall of Singapore in 1942. For the fall of this supposedly impregnable fortress not only shook English self-confidence to the core, but signalled the effective end of two centuries of war for the throne of France.

Real strength

Calais had been captured for England in the famous siege of 1347 by King Edward

III. From the outset, Edward planned that Calais should be an English town—'a little piece of England in France.' Most of its French inhabitants were expelled and replaced by English settlers, and the boundaries of the enclave, known as the Pale, expanded until it eventually averaged ten by 18 miles in area, with ill-defined frontiers which fluctuated slightly over the next two centuries. The Pale included one respectably sized town, Guines, with a number of villages and fortified strong points, and was a mixed area of farmland, woods and marshes. Calais itself occupied a rectangle of ground, defended by the castle and limestone walls pierced by four gates.

The homes and businesses of Calais's 4,000 inhabitants were set around a market square, dominated by government buildings and merchant warehouses.

Calais was important both strategically as a launch pad for English armies campaigning in France, and as a harbour on the shortest crossing point of the English Channel. The harbour was partly sheltered by a long sandspit, at the tip of which, and controlling the entrance, was the fortified Rysbank Tower. The walls of Calais required frequent repairs as a result of the marshy ground on which they were built, and the ravages of wind and water. But the real strength of Calais' defences were the extensive marshlands

which surrounded it. In time of attack, a system of sluices, controlled by the fort at Newembbridge, could be opened to let in the sea and inundate the landward approaches to Calais.

Calais could never be entirely self-sufficient. Both food and timber had to be brought across the Channel from England, and there were those who questioned the real value of Calais to England. In 1399, in an attempt to make the town more economically sustainable, Calais was awarded the wool 'staple', making it the only place from which English wool could legally be sold to continental merchants. The wool staple would remain the main source of the prosperity of the town for the next 200 years. Calais was also a place through which ambassadors, merchants and spies passed on their way between England and Europe.

Although the French made spasmodic attempts to regain Calais, the period of English supremacy in Northern France following Henry V's victory at Agincourt in 1415, and the alliance with Burgundy which followed, meant that the defences of Calais were neglected during the opening decades of the 15th century. Calais' first great test came in 1436, following the breakdown of the alliance with Burgundy. The Pale was invaded by a large Burgundian army, and a number of the outlying garrisons captured and destroyed. But the failure of the Burgundian fleet to establish an effective blockade of the harbour meant that the defenders of Calais could be regularly supplied and reinforced, and the siege ended in ignominious Burgundian failure.

The abortive siege strengthened Calais' reputation for impregnability, and it was not seriously threatened again for over a century. Even though by 1451 all other English territory in France had been lost, and in 1489 a French writer expressed a common view when he said that he 'would spend two years in Hell if he could have the pleasure of chasing the English out of Calais,' successive French monarchs made no attempt to regain Calais, reasoning that an abortive attack would risk triggering renewed full-scale warfare at a time when France had more pressing concerns.

Henry VIII's war

The defences of Calais remained a variable priority for successive English rulers. By the beginning of the 16th century, the major question was how best to counter the growing power of siege artillery. The castle, situated at the north-western corner of the town, was

clearly outdated and vulnerable, though no serious attempt was ever made to remedy this. The key to the defence of Calais was still seen to be the outlying network of dykes and waterways. Some of the outlying garrisons, notably that at Guines, were strengthened, but it was not until Henry VIII's renewed war with France exposed Calais to more serious threat that major attempts to modernise its defences began.

In 1532, Henry VIII ordered detailed plans to be prepared for the strengthening of the defences of Calais and the Pale. The fortifications were to be made more resistant to artillery fire, and gun platforms with overlapping fields of fire constructed. The existing town walls were to be backed by a rampart of earth, and the floodgates and dykes repaired, but little work was actually carried out. In 1536, the wall of the key frontier outpost at Guines was reported to be falling down as the result of severe frost. The current Lord Deputy, governor of Calais, reported that there was 'no remedy' other than a complete new wall, and work was carried out over the next few years, although much of it seems to have been of poor quality.

Henry VIII's continued conflict with France led to more extensive work being undertaken on the defences of Calais and the Pale, with an annual average of £7500 being spent over the next few years. In 1541, the Duke of Norfolk told the French envoy that Calais was 'the strongest town in Christendom'. This was an exaggeration; most building materials had to be transported from England, and

there was a shortage of skilled workmen. The marshy nature of much of the ground also made work difficult. When work on the new wall at Guines began, it was necessary to dig down for 25 feet before firm ground for the foundations could be reached.

The garrison of the Pale was strengthened at times of particular tension. In the 1540s, it averaged around 879 men, making it, at a time when there was no real standing army in England, by far the strongest garrison maintained by the crown. Although there were some criticisms of the quality of the troops employed, the Calais garrison had been seen for decades as a source of seasoned soldiers. In 1554, the records of the Treasurer of Calais provided for the pay of 31 mounted men-at-arms, 286 foot men-at-arms, 41 mounted archers, 316 foot archers and 40 crossbowmen. In addition there were over 70 gunners distributed among the garrisons of the Pale and small garrisons for minor outposts, known as 'bulwarks' at Newembbridge, Hammes and several other places. By the mid-16th century, the Pale garrisons were well-supplied with artillery of various sizes. The main problem lay in finding sufficient trained gunners to crew them.

French close in

By the time Mary Tudor came to the throne of England, there was an air of complacency about the security of Calais, unthreatened for so many years. However, Mary's marriage in 1554 to King Phillip II of Spain inevitably drew



Contemporary map of Calais and the Pale. Note the numerous watercourses and marshy areas. Rysbank Tower, top centre, controlling the entrance to Calais Harbour, is clearly visible.

England into Spain's ongoing war with France. In 1557, war was declared, and English troops played an important role in Spain's victory at St Quentin. King Henri II of France urgently needed a victory to counterbalance the defeat at St Quentin, and in the autumn of 1557 he became the driving force in plans to take Calais. His most successful commander, Francois, Duc de Guise, was recalled from campaigning in Italy and put in charge of preparations, with sweeping powers of command.

Guise was at first dubious about the undertaking, though prospects were improved when the Spanish army



Thomas, Lord Wentworth. The Queen's Deputy in Calais, Wentworth would be accused of treachery after the fall of the town. He seems more likely to have underestimated the French threat until it was too late, and then lost his nerve.

in Flanders withdrew into winter quarters. French spies brought back information on the strength of the English defences, which appeared not as formidable as had been feared. Nevertheless Guise's proposal for a surprise attack in December or January was a high-risk option in an age when winter campaigning was rare, and relied on obtaining a rapid result before the Spanish could mount a relief expedition or substantial reinforcements reached Calais from England.

The final go-ahead for the attack was given at a meeting between Henri II and Guise on 20 November, and by early December French troops had begun massing at Compiègne, before moving northwards to Abbeville in the middle of the month. By the end of December, an army of around 8,000 Swiss, 8,000 Germans, 8,000 French infantry and 3,000 cavalry were encamped between Marquise

and Ambleteuse.

It was impossible to keep preparations secret, and as early as October rumours were circulating in nearby Boulogne that the French were considering an attack on Calais, and the Spanish commanders in Flanders also believed this to be likely. Their concern was not shared by the English Privy Council or by Thomas, Lord Wentworth, Mary's Lord Deputy in Calais. Wentworth had been in post for several years, and had some previous military experience, having taken part in the Scottish campaigns of the 1540s. He was, however, described by one English diplomat as being 'rather negligent' and his attitude may have been affected by the presence in Calais of his pregnant wife and young son.

Although he claimed later to have expressed his concerns to Queen Mary, the evidence suggests that until late December, Wentworth convinced himself that French preparations were aimed at Spanish garrisons in Flanders, with only a raid on the Pale being likely. By late December, with French troops, heavy guns and siege equipment massing around Ambleteuse, and reports from prisoners taken by the Spanish confirming that Calais was the target, Wentworth was sufficiently concerned to hold a meeting on the 27th with William. Lord Grey of Wilton, who was governor of Guines.

Grey was one of England's most experienced commanders, who had fought in both France and Scotland, where he had been wounded by a pike thrust in the mouth at the victory at Pinkie. He was described as a 'noble, valiant and painful gentleman' and it was his military reputation which had led to Catholic Queen Mary giving Grey, despite his openly Protestant beliefs, command of the key garrison of Guines.

Wentworth still seems to have hoped that winter weather would thwart any French attack. In his letter to the Queen reporting his discussions with Grey, Wentworth, whilst admitting that Calais might be the French objective, still displayed no particular signs of urgency. His tone was pessimistic. The English commanders felt that most of the Pale should be abandoned and the English defenders concentrated in Calais, Guines and a few other outposts. There was a serious shortage of supplies in the key garrisons at Newembridge, Hamme and Rysbank Tower, whilst Calais itself was little better provided for. Only Grey's massive fortress at Guines, at least as strong as Calais itself, was in better shape

Shortages in England had prevented the

Queen's Privy Council from dispatching a supply convoy to Calais 'whereby is grown a very great scarcity of all things here.' Although Wentworth assured Mary that he would 'defend your places to the uttermost', he warned that the current bitterly cold and frosty weather might render Calais' water defences ineffective, and he doubted his ability to withstand a major French attack. Wentworth's report at last rang alarm bells in England. The Privy Council called out the militia of the southern counties, placing the earl of Rutland in command, and the Queen ordered Wentworth to hold on to Calais and its outlying garrisons, pending the arrival of these reinforcements.

On 29 December, Wentworth reported that he now believed French preparations were aimed not at Calais, but at Spanish-held New Hesdin in Flanders. In response, two days later Queen Mary called off the militia musters, only for Wentworth to write urgently on the same day that a French prisoner had reported that Calais was indeed the French objective, and that 30 or 40 French ships were preparing to put to sea from Boulogne, carrying scaling ladders and other siege equipment.. On the same day, Lord Grey reported from Guines that his patrols were already skirmishing with the French.

Attack Begins

On New Years Eve, French cavalry were sighted on the higher ground above Calais, and their fleet was reported to have sailed from Boulogne and begun to blockade Calais. By next morning, the French had advanced further into the Pale. Wentworth that night reported a day of skirmishing on the causeway carrying the road to Boulogne from Calais via Newembridge. French troops, moving out from Sangatte attempted to cut off English detachments on the causeway, and in response Sir Anthony Aucher, Marshal of Calais, sortied from the town with a party of light horse.

Fierce skirmishing took place along the causeway, with the English gradually falling back on Newembridge, claiming to have inflicted severe losses on the French. Fighting continued until dusk at around 3.00pm, with increasing numbers of French appearing. The French, Wentworth said, had advanced 'marvellously hotly'. The only English casualty was a man-at-arms in the Newembridge fort, who was hit by a cannon shot.

Generally optimistic, Wentworth reported that the bulwarks at Froyon and Nesle had been reinforced and were still



English archer, halberdier and arquebusier, mid-16th century. The arquebusier wears the white uniform of the Tudor family plus the red cross of St George. Painting by Richard Hook.



Re-enactors recreate appearance of German landsknechts. With their colourful dress and fearsome reputation, landsknechts were widely employed as mercenaries, and fought for the French at Calais.

holding out. But there were, he estimated, already around 12,000 French troops in the Pale, awaiting the arrival of the remainder of their forces and the Duc de Guise. He warned the Queen: 'Thus having set all things in the best order I can, I make an end of three days more, and leave Your Majesty to consider for our speedy succour.'

With Guises' arrival, the French moved rapidly into action next day. Half their force was to advance along the dunes towards Rysbank Tower, whilst another detachment was sent northwards to counter any Spanish relief attempt from the direction of Gravelines. In the course of the day, as Wentworth reported to the Queen late that evening, the English situation worsened steadily. At around 9.00am, large numbers of French advanced on the Newembridge fort. A party of English arquebusiers and bowmen sallied out to meet them, supported by artillery fire from the fort, and skirmishing took place until the English, without loss, retired into the fort. The French followed up, close under the walls of the fort, whose guns could not be depressed sufficiently to fire on them. In response, the defenders bore loopholes in the walls and opened up with arquebuses, forcing the French back within range of their cannon, whose fire drove the attackers back into the cover of

the causeway.

Elsewhere, faced by around 500 French and Swiss infantry who had infiltrated through the marshland, the defenders of the bulwarks at Froyton and Nesle abandoned their posts and retreated on Calais, driving a number of cattle along with them. The French had been able to advance through the marsh because Wentworth had on the previous day rejected the advice of his Council of War to open the sluice gates. Next day, some water was let in from the River Hammes, but, Wentworth explained, 'I would also take in salt water [to protect Calais] but I cannot do it, by reason I should infect our own water wherewith we brew [But] howsoever the matter go, we must shortly be forced to let in salt water.'

Wentworth remained optimistic that the French were short of supplies, and that they had been unable to unload their heavy guns from the ships lying off Calais. If the Queen and the Spaniards sent him speedy assistance, Wentworth believed all might still be well. In England, the militia levies had been called out again, to muster at Dover by the end of the week, and Sir William Woodhouse, the Vice Admiral of England, despite many of his seamen having fallen victim to an outbreak of influenza, put to sea on 3 January with a small squadron of ships. But by then

the situation in Calais was deteriorating rapidly.

Fall of the Castle

The civilian population of the Pale, joined by Wentworth's wife and child, had either attempted to follow Wentworth's orders to cross the dunes, despite the harsh winter weather and seek refuge with their cattle in Spanish Flanders, or had made their way into Calais itself, where the men were hastily organised into ad-hoc companies to assist in the defence, whilst the women were set to work trying to strengthen the fortifications.

But the garrison's situation was worsening rapidly. In the course of the morning, Captain Nicholas Alexander, commanding at Newembridge, seeing the strength of the enemy force being brought against him, decided that the fort was indefensible, and without orders, evacuated it and retreated to Calais. Worse was to follow. French troops were advancing along the spit of sand dunes at the tip of which the Rysbank Tower was situated, and they also brought up heavy guns, which, despite Wentworth's optimism, had been landed from the ships off-shore. These opened fire, quickly dismounted the Rysbank guns, and inflicted a number of casualties. Feeling resistance to be useless, its commander,

Captain John Harleston, surrendered. As a result, Calais harbour was not only barred to any relief force from England, but the French could also bring up guns to fire across at the town itself

The capture of Newembriage fort meant that the sluice gates there were now under French control and Wentworth could no longer hope to place a water barrier between himself and the enemy on the landward side of Calais. As French guns, including a battery of 60 pieces which concentrated their fire on the castle, opened up, Calais' Master Gunner, John Highfield, ordered a counter-barrage, but he later claimed, his best guns were quickly silenced, and he lacked trained gunners. However, the French bombardment did relatively little damage to the town itself, and breaches in the walls were hastily plugged with bales of wool.

The barrage directed at the town walls was designed to draw English attention away from the castle, which was much more vulnerable. Wentworth and his officers had already decided that, with only 800 soldiers and 200 armed civilians, they lacked the men to defend it against a serious assault; instead the plan was to explode barrels of gunpowder stored there if the French broke in.

At low tide on the evening of 6 January, at around 8.00pm, a party of 400 Frenchmen, led by Piero Strozzi, a marshal of France, and Marshal de Guillemot, crossed the harbour, covered by artillery fire, and either scaled the castle walls or entered through a breach. The garrison had partially evacuated the castle, but an attempt to explode the gunpowder there failed. The defenders were also distracted by a feint attack at Lanterngate on the town walls. Apparently, there were a few troops still in the castle, but a spirited attack by Gascon soldiers took their improvised barricades, and drove them back into the towers nearest to the town.

Wentworth had three cannon and a lighter saker brought up to fire on the castle gateway in an attempt to prevent the French from breaking into the town. Sir Anthony Aucher, Marshal of Calais, and the most energetic of the English commanders, hastily gathered a party of soldiers and made a counterattack which temporarily gained control of the bridge leading out of the castle over its moat. But more and more Frenchmen were pouring into the Castle from the harbour side, and Aucher, his son and 16 of their men were killed and the counterattack repulsed.

Right: Francois, 2nd Duc de Guise. Guise was one of the outstanding French commanders of the mid-16th century. He was killed on the outbreak of the Wars of Religion in 1560.



Below: Contemporary illustration of the siege of Calais. Although some of the topographical details are inaccurate, the castle and town walls can be seen clearly.



Battle for the Bulwark

Although the town was still in English hands, and some street fighting took place, Wentworth's determination to resist, never very strong, was fading rapidly. A council of war was called to decide whether to fight to the death or to surrender. The Master Gunner, John Highfield, claimed later that he had favoured continued resistance, but if so, he was overruled by the representatives of the townspeople, and a message asking for a parley was sent to Guise. By morning, surrender terms had been agreed. Wentworth and his chief officers and leading townspeople were to be held for ransom, whilst the other 4,000 civilians and soldiers were allowed across the frozen dunes to Gravelines.

Although Calais itself had fallen so ignominiously, Guines and the outpost at Hammes still held out. Lord Grey, although probably pessimistic about the

chances of relief, was determined to at least make a fight of it. Not only was his reputation as a soldier at stake, but as a Protestant serving a Catholic queen at a time when rumours of treason were rife, he probably had concerns about the personal consequences if he was seen to yield too easily. On 4 January, as he listened to the sound of the French artillery bombardment at Calais, Grey told the Queen that he would 'not fail to do the duty of a faithful subject and Captain although the enemy attempt never so stoutly, according to the trust reposed in me.' If he could hold out long enough, there was a faint possibility that the Spanish might come to his aid, and indeed a few Spanish troops did arrive to reinforce the defenders of Guines.

Guise also granted Grey a short breathing space. A few days were needed to establish French control of Calais more firmly, and prepare against the



16th century bastion under attack. Note that the defenders have lost possession of part of it, and have constructed a barricade from which to defend the remainder.

counterattack from England, which was thought to be highly likely. Then the decision had to be made whether to exploit the victory by advancing against Spanish-held Gravelines, or whether instead to complete the conquest of the Pale by taking Guines and the remaining small English outposts.

Despite continuing bad weather, the strong fortress of Guines was seen as the most immediate threat, and on 13 January the French began their advance. With around 800 men, Grey had too few troops to defend the town itself, and after some skirmishing he fell back into the castle, firing some of the houses to deny cover to the enemy.

The key to Grey's defence was the massive, recently built Mary Bulwark, lying outside the castle, which Grey manned with around 450 men. They included 150 recently arrived Spanish and Walloon reinforcements under Captain Mountdragon, and 300 English soldiers, a mixture of harquebusiers and pikemen, commanded by Captains Lambert and Barnes.

French operations got off to a slow start, with Guise hindered by lack of pioneers to construct artillery platforms. His soldiers, particularly the German landsknechts, were unwilling to perform such an undignified task, and work was hindered by sorties made by Grey, in one of which Guise himself narrowly escaped capture. In one night attack, Grey's men 'slew no small number of their sleeping guests.' As a result, it was not until 17

January that the French bombardment, focussing on the Mary Bulwark, began, employing two batteries of 13 and nine guns respectively.

The French guns made slow progress, for although they 'clean cut away' the poorly constructed brick facing wall of the bulwark, attempts to open up a breach were hindered by strenuous efforts by the defenders to repair the damage. The French were unable to launch an assault across the moat until Italian engineers improvised pontoons made from planks and empty casks. An initial probing assault was made early on 18 January by 'a party of 40 or 50 forlorn boys with swords and rondels to view and essay the breach'.

The defenders allowed the forlorn hope to enter the breach, then counterattacked, and 'having received a few pushes of pike, they retired.' Two parties of Gascon troops now attacked the breach, and were received with hurled pots of wildfire and arquebus shot, 'so jolly Mr Gascon was sent down with more haste than he came up'. Nevertheless, the French artillery bombardment exacted a steady toll. Grey's deputy, Sir Henry Palmer, lost a leg to a cannon shot, and many of the English guns were silenced.

The defenders of the Mary Bulwark also suffered severely. Thomas Churchyard, one of the English soldiers there, described how 'My captain's head was smitten off with a cannon shot and out of our Band were left no more but one Master Holford

and I, to guide the whole company. And Captain Dilshire was wounded to the death, whose Band fought manfully in the revenge of their Captain. Captain Lambert was creased with a great shot, and mine armour, with the breaking of a great piece [gun] was shaken flat upon my body.' By nightfall, about 150 of the defenders had been killed.

French guns maintained their barrage until darkness fell. During the night, the defenders of the Mary Bulwark worked feverishly to plug the breach. At daylight on the 19th, the French bombardment was resumed. The French guns had created a killing zone on the approaches to the Bulwark which effectively isolated its defenders from the Castle. The French now brought up a heavy gun and positioned it in Guines marketplace from where it lobbed shot into the Castle itself. Sitting in the courtyard with his officers, Lord Grey narrowly escaped being hit.

The weight of the concentrated bombardment, with by the end of the siege 8-9,000 shots fired, continued to fall on the Mary Bulwark. Here the heavier balls were 'piercing through the rampart and a new countermure of earth raised upon the same.'

In the afternoon, Swiss and Gascon troops made a renewed assault on the Bulwark and bitter hand-to-hand fighting continued until Grey opened fire with two concealed cannon. 'The ditches and the breach being covered with men, what havoc they made it is not hard to guess,'

wrote Churchyard, though he added 'we went not scot-free, but surely no small number of their carcasses took up their lodgings that night in the ditch.'

Fighting on their Knees

Possibly exaggerated contemporary estimates were that between 900 and 1,000 French had died during the course of the day's fighting, but the defenders of the Bulwark also suffered severely. There were now well under 300 of them left, and Grey, who had himself been injured during the day when he trod on the sword of one of his men, could not reinforce the Bulwark. By the end of the day, wrote Churchyard, his exhausted men were 'fighting on their knees... and always when the enemy's first men did wax feeble with labour, there came a new relief of fresh bands to continue the assault, so that as long as the daylight served, it seemed by the fight, a bloody broil hath no end, nor season to take breath in, which certainly would have daunted my heart living.' By the time fighting died down with the coming of darkness, some of the defenders were almost asleep on their feet.

Once more during the night, the surviving English and Spaniards struggled to repair the breach, which steadily widened as the inferior materials from which the Bulwark had been built crumbled rapidly under concentrated French fire. The attackers also kept up constant alarms during the night, preventing the defenders from snatching any rest.

At dawn on 20 January, Guise's engineers informed him that the breach was assailable, and pioneers with picks, covered by the fire of arquebusiers, were sent to widen it further. Guise, believing that the Bulwark could not be held much longer, took up position on the higher ground to watch the final assault.

The attack was spearheaded by German landsknechts, backed up by French infantry under Colonel D'Andelot. French engineers had prepared pontoon bridges made from planks lashed to empty casks with which the assault troops were to cross the moat, but the attackers, possibly fortified with drink, charged forward 'with such hot haste and desperate hardiness, that entering a deep ditch full of water, from the bottom whereof to the top was full 40 feet, without fear for either the water beneath or the fire above, they mounted the breach.'

But 'such hot haste notwithstanding, the said assailants were, in this first assault, so stoutly repulsed and put back

by the defenders, being furnished with great store of wildfire and fracasses [possibly fire pikes] for this purpose, thus they were hurled down headlong, one upon another, much faster than they came up, not without great waste and slaughter of their best and most brave soldiers.'

The Duc De Guise 'as a man enraged... ran among his men so reproving some, and encouraging others, that the assault was hot-foot renewed, and with no less obstinacy and desperation received by the defendants, and nearly all the breach underneath was filled with French carcasses.'

But, although perhaps another 800 French fell during the daylong fighting, there could be only one outcome. As D'Andelot's men flooded through the breach, the last defenders of the Mary Bulwark were overwhelmed. The surviving Spaniards were butchered without mercy, whilst Thomas Churchyard and 15 English survivors 'leaped down into the dikes and so to scramble for their lives, and creep into a hole of a brick wall which my Lord Grey had broken out to receive such as escaped from the assault. But when we entered the hole in the wall, the French followed at our heels, and we, to save our lives, turned again, leaning pikes against the passage, and so shot off one harquebus by which means the enemy followed no further. And yet we were in as great distress as before. For we were between two gates, and at the gate where we should have entered, were two great cannon, ready charged to be shot off. And the cry and noise was so great and terrible, on all sides, that we could not be heard,' until another officer, Lewis Dyves, eventually hard them and opened the gate. 'And yet in the opening of the gate the French were like to enter pell-mell with us, if a cannon shot had not made place, whilst the gate was a-shutting.'

Abominable treason

By the end of the day, the garrison had lost control of all of the castle outworks, but Grey was resolute to fight on. Most of his troops, however, had had enough, and threatened 'to fling my Lord Grey off the walls' unless he agreed to seek terms. Grey reluctantly agreed, though his emissaries held out for terms allowing for a surrender with honour. Guise replied that, considering the defenders' desperate state, this was 'a stout brag, to seek a capitulation with such advantage upon.' But it was eventually agreed that the rank and file of the garrison should go free, whilst Grey and his officers were held



The watchtower built by King Henry VII is one of the few surviving traces of English Calais.

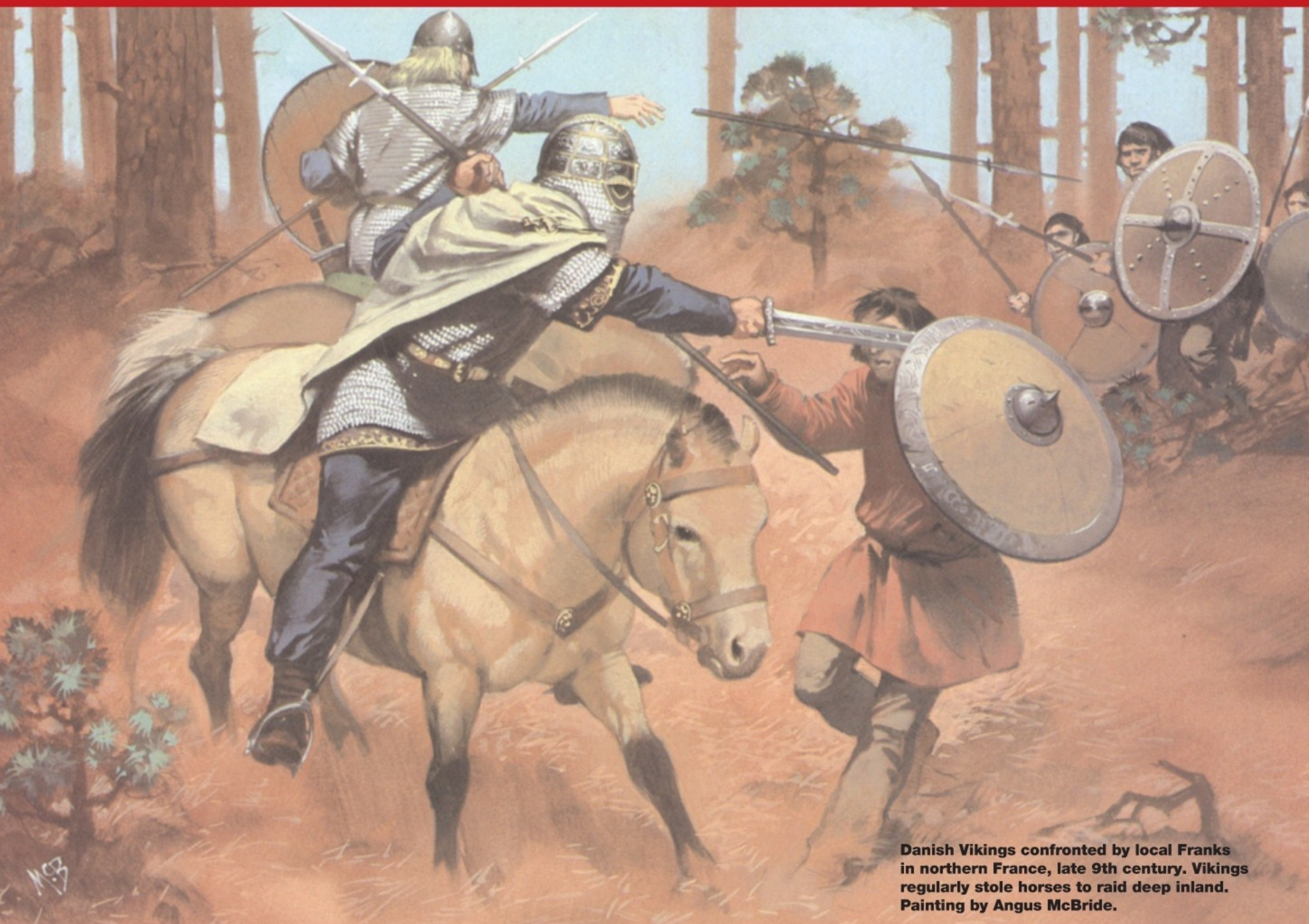
for ransom.

Meanwhile, seeing that all was lost, the garrison of Hammes, the remaining English outpost, had slipped away through the marshes to the safety of Gravelines.

News of the loss of Calais had a devastating effect in England. One chronicler described it as 'the heaviest tidings to London and England that ever was heard of' and it was said that the angry people refused to go to Mass.

The inevitable search for a scapegoat 'for the most abominable treason that ever man heard of' followed. The real culprits, Queen Mary and her Privy Council, who had failed to act in time to save Calais, could hardly be blamed. On his return to England, Wentworth was tried for treason, but acquitted. Instead, the unfortunate captains of Newembridge and Rysbank Tower were sentenced to death, but soon afterwards pardoned. Lord Grey, portrayed as the only hero of the humiliating defeat, had his ransom paid by the new Queen Elizabeth.

For many years, dwindling hopes of regaining the lost 'piece of England in France' remained, but by the following century, an English writer commented dismissively: 'now it is gone, let it go. It was but a beggarly town.' •



Danish Vikings confronted by local Franks in northern France, late 9th century. Vikings regularly stole horses to raid deep inland. Painting by Angus McBride.

VIKING RAIDERS

Notorious as the most ferocious raiders of the early medieval world, RICHARD BULL recounts some of their most ambitious campaigns—but also dispels a few myths along the way.

The impact of the Scandinavian Vikings was first noted around the year 800. Around this date, ferocious raids by Northmen on British monasteries and island communities were recorded. At the same time, the completion of a savage campaign against the Saxons in north-west Germany brought the Carolingians face to face with the warriors of Denmark. Viking raids soon followed. And yet, the belief that a new race of marauders had suddenly sprung out of Scandinavia is a false one.

North Sea Piracy

Scandinavian tribes had long been involved in the movements of Germanic barbarians. Most of those German tribes that had invaded England in the 5th century came from Denmark. Many notable Barbarian confederations, such as the Goths, claimed to have originated in the lands of the Baltic. Nordic pirates had always been rife in the North Sea, using shallow-draught sea-going ships. The raids of the Vikings in the 9th and 10th centuries were only the latest in a long tradition of sea-borne Scandinavian assaults.

Gregory of Tours recorded a Danish raid, on the Frankish territory of King Theuderic in the early 6th century, which has all the characteristics of later Viking attacks. A Danish fleet ran ashore, captured some local inhabitants, loaded their ships with their booty and prepared to sail home. Theuderic reacted promptly, however, and beat the invaders in a naval battle, retrieving all the lost property.

Nevertheless, by the late 8th century, certain developments occurred which, in hindsight, gave the appearance of a sudden explosion of activity among the Scandinavians. They had perfected the



Viking wearing typical helmet with nasal, found in Sweden.

design of their sea-going ships—sails were added to the power of their oars—and this led to an increase in the amount of piracy in the North Sea. Short trips across strips of sea or along familiar coastlines had always been possible, but now more extensive voyages could be undertaken.

At the same time, in the period from 600 to 800, the Scandinavian language underwent a profound change that transformed it from a language similar to that of the Germans, to the south of them, to one that was specifically nordic. This, combined with the fact that the Scandinavians were still a pagan people, meant that they were now viewed by their neighbouring German kingdoms as an alien race. No longer did they share a language, culture, religion or common aims. While the Scandinavians still pursued a roving, scavenging way of life, their raids increasingly threatened the settled Germanic dynasties and Christian communities. The Scandinavians and Germans were no longer allies intent on sacking a Romanised Europe, for the Germans were now part of that Latin

establishment, while the Scandinavians were still outsiders.

Such an explanation of the Viking phenomenon in the west is far more convincing than the suggestion that there was a sudden population explosion in Scandinavia that forced its people outwards. Certainly, populations in Scandinavia were increasing, but this was common throughout Europe. In addition to the altered perspective in which the Scandinavians were regarded in the 9th and 10th centuries, it must be remembered that the Germanic chronicles which supposedly first record Viking raids against England and France were both compiled around the dates they mention. They are not accurate historical surveys over hundreds of years, and do not record regular occurrences before the time of their compilation. That there were no frequent raids by Scandinavian war-bands on England and France before 800 is difficult to believe and contrary to archaeological evidence.

Charlemagne versus Vikings

On one day in 782, Charlemagne had

4,500 Saxon prisoners massacred. It is little wonder then that Godfred, King of the Danes, watched with alarm as the Franks wiped out all opposition in north-west Germany and approached his territory. With Saxony subdued, the northern-most frontier of the Carolingians ran across the base of Jutland. At the heart of this Empire was a man who increasingly saw his wars of imperialist conquest as worthy crusades against the heathen Northerners.

At first, relations between the two states was cordial. Danish chieftains were received at the court of Charlemagne despite the piratical activities of their fellow countrymen along the northern coast. To curb the Danish raids, Charlemagne strengthened his coast guard and improved his fleet. Strong-points were erected at all ports and at the mouths of rivers, so that if any Vikings sailed into them, they could be bottled up by a special military task force. Similar defences were used in southern France and Italy against the Arabs. Indeed, it has been said that the strong coastal defences of the Franks were responsible for encouraging the Danes to venture a little further and turn to England in their search for softer targets.

By the first decade of the 9th century, the Carolingians had so far encroached on the Danes' sphere of influence that confrontation was inevitable. To prevent invasion, Godfred built an immense timber and earth rampart, called the Danework, which linked natural obstacles across Jutland from the North Sea to the Baltic. Then, in 810, he sent 200 ships into Frisian territory, recently acquired by the Carolingian Empire. The Danish seamen were unopposed and Godfred felt so confident of his powers that he boasted that he would next invade Aachen, Charlemagne's capital. But, as Charlemagne prepared for the last campaign of his career, King Godfred was assassinated and the Danish threat melted away. A conflict had been established, however, and the two powers wrangled over the borderlands.

By the middle of the 9th century, Frisia was paying such regular protection money to the Danes that it could be considered Viking property. The Northmen therefore took their raids further afield, along the French coast and inland. There was very little the Carolingians could do. Following the death of Charlemagne, the old imperial realm had been torn by civil wars and was eventually divided into separate kingdoms, each more concerned about

each other than with the raiders. Previously, the Danes had been content to run their shallow-draught boats up onto a beach, jump out, pillage a nearby community and leap back into their ships for a quick getaway. With an increase in the size of their fleets, experience of where they were going and a decrease in organised coastal defence, the Vikings grew more daring.



Hilt of gold decorated Viking sword found in Norway.

Raid on Paris

The weakness of the Carolingian dominion encouraged an explosion of northern raiding. Once they landed, the Danes conducted small campaigns against the surrounding districts. They stole horses to ride inland and soon Viking armies were threatening major urban centres. The Franks were forced to pay massive tributes to the invaders. Even so, large stretches of land fell under direct Viking control. French peasants formed groups to ensure their own defence but were frequently crushed by Frank nobles in league with the Vikings. Many Franks hoped to ally themselves with the ascending power: the Carolingians were proving incapable of any concerted action. Often they had to resort to hiring Viking mercenaries to combat those Danes taking over their lands. At this time the efforts of Alfred the Great in England were reversing the

flow of freebooters back to the continent for easy pickings.

Across both France and Germany, great cities went up in flames. Paris, situated on an island in the middle of the Seine, proved particularly attractive. It had been ravaged before but, in 885, a huge Danish army sailed upon it, probably intent on long-term conquest. With so many warriors crammed in to their dragon ships, the Danes decided to assault the city straightaway but, under the command of Count Eudes, the island fortress proved a tough nut to crack.

As the Vikings clambered up their scaling ladders, clutching swords and axes, the Parisians poured boiling oil, wax and pitch upon them. The scalding liquid clung to the warriors and many, in their agony, tried to tear the burning hair from their heads. Unable to storm Paris immediately, the Danes settled in for a siege. As they endeavoured to cut the city off from the outside world, they constructed awesome engines. Massive battering rams of oak were raised onto roofed carriages with 16 wheels. Large screens, capable of shielding four men, were covered with the skin of young bulls: holes were made in them through which burning arrows were fired. Several catapults hurled lumps of molten lead into the city.

The ingenuity of the Danes was matched by that of the Parisians. When the siege machines were brought forward for a major attack, heavy beams tipped with iron were lowered from the walls to crush the engines. From the battlements, ballistae and stone-throwing catapults battered the Danes. The rocks smashed their shields and bashed out their brains, according to a chronicler of the conflict. The siege continued for almost a year. In that time, wagons loaded with burning turf were pushed against the city towers and blazing fireships tied against bridges. Several times the Danes fought off relieving armies, but all to no avail. Paris did not fall and eventually the Vikings accepted a tribute from the Frank king in return for their withdrawal.

The sophistication of Danish siege-machines may seem surprising but there is other evidence of such technology throughout this period. The continuity of Roman-style weaponry is revealed in an Anglo-Saxon riddle:

'I am the defender of my people.
Strengthened with wires and filled
with gifts,
During the day I spit them forth.
The fuller I am the better I am.

I swallow dark weapons of war.
Bitter arrows and poisonous spears.
I have a good stomach.
Men seldom forget what passes
through my mouth.'

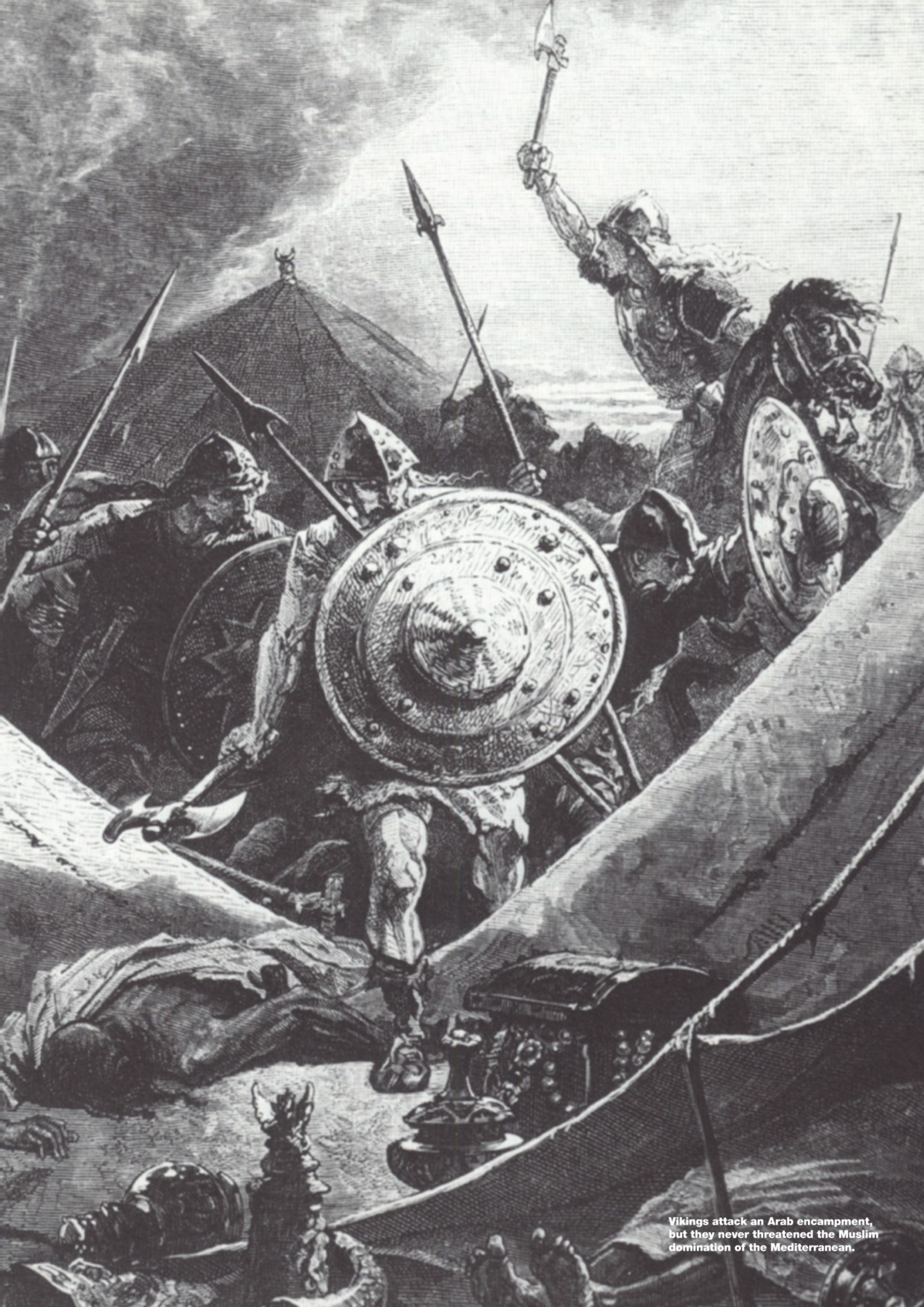
Ballista is the answer. In another riddle—recorded in the 10th century, but probably far older—a battering-ram is described as 'A tree-trunk, once swathed in rich foliage, is now bound in chains and its head adorned with more sombre trappings.'

Several old English riddles are a highly imaginative interpretation of everyday objects and deal with many used in war. The harsh voice of the horn blown in battle; the shield weary of combat which can find no cure for its wounds from roots or herbs; a tree of four timbers, covered with silver and inlaid with jewels, with a goldhilted sword hanging from one of its branches. The last is a sword-rack.

Viking weapons

Many of the weapons used by both the Germans and the Scandinavians, though straight-forward in design, were skilfully adorned. Pattern-welded swords, still popular among the Vikings, were given dramatic names, according to their appearance and performance, such as 'Snake of wounds', 'Lightning flash of blood', and 'Mail-biter'. Viking swords usually had double-edged blades about 90 cm (3 ft) long. From the regularity of their mention in Scandinavian literature, it appears that Frankish swords from the Rhineland, as well as spear-blades, were strongly favoured. These imported, or stolen, blades were then given splendid hilts by native craftsmen. Straight cross-guards were made of bone, antler or ivory, which was then further encrusted with precious metals and stones according to the wealth of the warrior. Grips were covered in leather while pommels were of metal, sometimes inscribed with the name of owner and maker. These swords were of such value that they could be passed on for generations.

An alternative, or addition to the sword, was the scramasax, a long single-edged knife. However, spears remained the commonest weapon, with lighter ones used for throwing and heavier ones for hand-to-hand. Spear carrying and throwing horse-warriors continued to be an important element in battle and many Viking stirrups and spurs have been found. Aside from the spear, the battle-axe has emerged as the most characteristic weapon of the Northmen.



Vikings attack an Arab encampment, but they never threatened the Muslim domination of the Mediterranean.

Unlike the Frankish throwing-axe, it was principally a broad-bladed close combat weapon that could be wielded with one hand or, with a longer shaft, becoming a terrifying two-handed weapon. Axe blades were also enriched and engraved. Shields, helmets and mail shirts followed much the same form as throughout the early medieval world. What certainly gave the Vikings in battle a material advantage over their adversaries was that as professional raiders they had greater access to a wide variety of ransacked weapons and armour and so, on the whole, were better equipped.

Byzantine mercenaries

With secure bases in France and England, Vikings sailed further southwards, attacking Muslim Spain and bursting into the Mediterranean. They ransacked the city of Luna along the Italian coast, thinking it was Rome. There was little limit to the ambition of the Northmen. And yet, these achievements were largely accomplished by the Danes. The Norwegians were content to concentrate their attention on the north Atlantic and pursue daring exploration. The Swedes, on the other hand, made inroads into continental regimes like the Danes, but their chosen path was eastwards, along the rivers of Russia and eastern Europe, following perhaps the routes of earlier Germanic tribes, such as the Goths. For these warriors, the greatest pirate prizes were to be found along the coasts of the Black Sea.

The Byzantines had little patience for these wild men from the North and called

them plainly 'Barbarians'. Inevitably, Constantinople—still the most splendid of all cities—came under siege several times from the Vikings. The city did not fall. On most occasions the Vikings were content with forcing the citizens to grant them lucrative trade concessions. Still, the Byzantines had a tough time of it and were so impressed with the Northmen as fighters that the emperors recruited them. They became the famed Varangian Guard, acting as personal bodyguards and an especially feared branch of the Byzantine army.

The daughter of one of the Eastern emperors, Anna Comnena, described the Northmen as 'Men who hung their swords and axes from their shoulders and regard their loyalty to the Emperor and his protection as a sacred duty, an inheritance to be handed from father to son.' The Greeks were impressed not only by their loyalty, but their physical size as well. They were nordic giants among Mediterranean men.

The wealth to be obtained from serving the Byzantines was tremendous and whenever the Swedes returned to their homeland, the Scandinavians were deeply impressed by the travellers' rich clothes. One description of returning Varangian warriors pictures them in scarlet baggy trousers and riding on gilded saddles. Their leader wore a tunic and trousers of silk, over which hung a cloak of scarlet. His sword hilt was ornamented with gold thread wound round the grip. On his head he wore a gilded helmet and he carried a scarlet shield. Wherever they stopped,

native nordic women could not keep their eyes off the brilliant warriors.

Another description of the eastern Vikings again mentions their baggy trousers, fastened around the knee, but adds kaftans and tall hats. The Varangian Guard was established around the end of the 10th century—for a century before this, the Northmen had been untamed marauders.

Fire-breathing dragons

With the subjugation of various Slavonic, Finnish and Eurasian tribes, the Swedish Vikings of the 9th century became the rulers of western Russia, where they were known as the Rus. From

their southern capital at Kiev, and from surrounding strongholds, several ambitious campaigns were carried out, ranging from the Caspian to the Black Sea. Not least of these were their attacks on Constantinople. Around the year 907, King Oleg of Kiev led a fleet of upwards of 200 ships against the Byzantines. Each ship carried forty men. Large as this may seem, far greater Viking forces were also recorded.

Compared to his own ships, Emperor Leo VI noted that the boats the Rus used were 'smaller, lighter, faster crafts, because sailing into the Black Sea through the rivers, they cannot use bigger ships.' Sometimes the Rus attacked overland. The Russian Primary Chronicle, compiled by Nestor in the 12th century, states that Oleg's assault on Constantinople was by ship and by horse. The employment of mounted warriors does suggest that this was a major campaign, although the chronicle may well be at fault. In the main, most Viking raids were from the sea.

To counter these, the Byzantines drew a massive chain across the inlet of the Golden Horn to the north of their capital, but faced with such an obstacle, the Rus merely beached their boats and ravaged the surrounding communities on foot. Frequently, these conflicts were settled with tributes and a trade treaty. To Oleg, the Byzantines gave brocade sails for his Viking ships and silk sails for the Slavs that fought with him. These fancy sails were soon torn by the wind and they reverted to ones of canvas.

When the Byzantines did fight back against the Rus raiders, one of their most effective weapons was Greek Fire. The pirate fleet of King Igor suffered badly from this in 941. Surrounding a smaller Byzantine force and expecting easy plunder, the Vikings were suddenly enveloped in a blazing mixture of crude oil and other combustibles pumped through metal tubes mounted on their victims' ships. With their clothes and hair aflame, Rus sailors flung themselves into the sea rather than endure the sulphurous, burning hell on board. The Viking fleet was annihilated. The terror provoked by these early flame-throwers encouraged the Rus to return home with tales maintaining that the Byzantines possessed the very lightning from heaven.

Byzantine craftsmen capitalised on this awe and designed metal tubes in the shape of weird animals, so that the fire spewed from their mouths. It is little wonder that stories of fire-breathing dragons were frequent among the Northmen. It may also be that mythological accounts from



Carved head from the stem-post of a Danish raiding ship of the 5th century, evidence of Scandinavian assaults long before the age of the Vikings.



Swedish Vikings, known as Rus, board a Byzantine ship deploying Greek Fire against them in the Black Sea, early 10th century. Painting by Angus McBride.

Scandinavia of special tunics which made the wearer invulnerable, actually derived from flame-proof clothes, woven from asbestos and silk, that the Byzantines are said to have devised.

Interestingly, one northern saga has an alternative description of just such a protective garment. To defend himself against a fire-breathing dragon, the warrior hero dipped a coarse woollen coat in tar until it was matted and then rolled it in sand to give it an impregnable surface.

Berserkr warriors

The chief fear-inducing weapon the Vikings possessed was themselves. The impression that their nordic stature and ferocity made on the Byzantines has already been mentioned but there were, however, a special group of warriors amongst the Vikings, in both the east and the west, who made even their own comrades feel uneasy. They were the hard-men in whom courage was mingled with madness. They were the berserkr.

Wearing no armour, but clad in

bear-fur and other animal skins, these terrifying warriors rushed into battle mowing down everyone before them. They had no fear, for their rage of bloodlust overcame the pain of their wounds. Howling like wolves, they bit their shields, and when their weapons were shattered through frenzied blows, they tore their enemies apart with bare hands in a fury of animal strength.

This crazed state has been ascribed to the taking of hallucinogens, but it seems more likely that it was simply the alcohol-enhanced action of wild men. Hardened psychopaths have accompanied every army and robber band throughout history, and it was probably the perverse thrill they obtained from violence that fuelled these warriors onto superhuman feats. Such human beasts have always been men to avoid and it is not surprising that the Vikings themselves considered these warriors to be possessed—turning into werewolves under cover of night. For most of the time, they managed to hide their dark nature, but once they got whiff of a fight, their calm character was

unbalanced and these warriors became ravening animals again.

Though renowned for their ferocity, the majority of Vikings were, in reality, no more ferocious than other barbarian warriors.

Sea battles

The Vikings did, however, possess one unique attribute that gave them a very definite edge over many of their contemporaries. The Scandinavian mastery of water-borne warfare can be compared to the excellent horsemanship of the steppe warriors. It has been said that the seamanship of the Vikings has been overestimated: after all, the majority of their raids either closely followed the continental coasts or simply penetrated European waterways. This might have been true of the Danes and the Swedes, but the navigational feats of the Norwegians were quite remarkable. This aside, the quality of the Vikings as ocean-going warriors is hardly the point. Very few battles were actually fought at sea. One account of just such an armed



The Viking attack on Paris in AD 885 turned into a bitter siege.

encounter, around 1000, shows that the ensuing battle was more like an action fought on land than a battle requiring naval skills.

When Olaf Trygvason of Norway sailed out against an alliance of Scandinavian rulers, he roped his ships together so that they were not so much a fleet as a floating platform. Fortunately for Olaf, when the two sides clashed, he had the advantage of craft with higher decks. Anchors and boathooks were hurled at the opposing ships to secure them so that warriors could charge onto each others' decks. The main missile weapons in action were the usual bows and light throwing spears employed on land. At times, stones were also used, either thrown or powered by slings. There was no attempt by either side to ram or outmanoeuvre each other.

As fortunes changed, the Scandinavian alliance forced the Norwegian crews on the outermost boats to retreat inwards. Winning ship after ship, the Scandinavians slashed the ropes keeping

together the ships and so increasingly isolated their opponents on the splendid carved and gilded Long Serpent ship of Olaf. A fierce last stand took place, during which many of Olaf's warriors threw themselves into the sea rather than be captured. At the end, after throwing spears with both hands and wielding his sword until it was blunt, Olaf joined his faithful warriors and plunged to his death amongst the waves.

Even such a major marine combat as this was probably not fought on the open-sea but in a bay or river mouth. It is little wonder that after their initial foray into the Mediterranean, the Danes did not try to challenge the naval might of the Arabs; or, when the Swedes decided to attack Constantinople, they waited until the Byzantine fleet was away on other business.

The strength of the Vikings lay in the amphibious nature of their raids. No other group of warriors could equal this versatility. In the West, once the Danes had sailed their ships up onto a beach,

they could then take themselves deep inland on horse-back. Alternatively, once the great rivers of France proved too shallow ever for their slender craft, they took to smaller canoes and penetrated even further, finally advancing on foot to subdue a city.

In the East, the Swedes were masters of the waterways of Eurasia. From their island or riverbank fortresses, they launched raiding campaigns numbering hundreds of boats against powerful bastions. If needs be, as in their assault on Constantinople in 907, they mounted their ships on rollers and let the wind fill their sails to help them overland. All this gave the Vikings the primary military advantages of speed, mobility and surprise.

Travelling deep into unknown territory, the Vikings fought a battle against the harsh environment as violent and taxing as any test of arms. The hardship and fears of this roving life are best conveyed in an Anglo-Saxon poem commonly called 'The Seafarer'. Probably based on the accounts of the same warrior exile described in *The Wanderer*, it opens with the wild weather conditions endured on the North Sea. The Seafarer takes his turn at night watch. The ship dips and rises perilously near a rocky coastline. His feet are frozen to the deck. Icicles hang all around him. Hail stones beat down. His only comfort is the cry of the seabirds. But these serve only to remind him of the laughter of the drinking-hall.

'How can the land dweller, living in a city and flushed with wine, know the suffering of sailing?' asks the seafarer. 'And yet, despite snow from the north, frost and hail, deep down there is a yearning to undertake a journey. To see a new land, a foreign people. But there is no man, so brave or so bold, that he does not feel fear when venturing on the sea. All thought of the joy of music, the receiving of rings, ecstasy in a woman, all worldly pleasures, are replaced by the relentless rolling of the waves. But even then, the mind travels over the sea, across the whale's domain, to strange new regions and the spirit is urged onwards. This life is fleeting and the best a warrior can hope for is to win the respect of those living after him. The finest monument is to achieve noble and daring deeds in this world so his name may be honoured by his children.'

In these lines, the wanderlust of the warrior overcoming the dread and danger of roaming in an alien, hostile world, is potently expressed. It is an impressive evocation of the essential character of the Viking •

Great Military Artists



Melville and Goghill attempt to save the Queen's Colours in the Zulu War. Painted by Charles Fripp.



Charles Fripp in campaign dress armed with a revolver.

Charles E Fripp

Charles Edwin Fripp was a Special War Artist for *The Graphic*, a popular pictorial newspaper founded in 1869. He reported the Zulu War of 1879 in word and pictures. His most celebrated work in oil on canvas is 'The Last Stand at Isandhlhula' (also called 'The Battle of Isandhlwana') painted in 1885 and now housed in the National Army Museum, London.

Special War Artist

Fripp was born in Bristol in 1854 to a Quaker family. His father, a landscape painter, sent him to study art at the Royal Academy in Munich. In 1878, aged 24, he embarked upon a long career as a special artist on campaign for *The Graphic*. He covered the Zulu War, the fighting in Sudan in the 1880s, the Matabele War of 1896, the Philippines campaign of the Spanish-American War of 1898, and the Boer War at the turn of the century.

A special artist required courage under fire, a sketchbook, pencils, and a good

horse, plus bags of resourcefulness in getting the drawings back to London where they could be 'worked-up' and polished for publication by in-house artists such as R Caton Woodville. Fripp was a small but tough action-man, handy with his fists, possessed of a fierce temper that flared when he came against obstructive military rules that he considered to hamper his task in the field.

During the battle of Ulundi, Fripp remained behind, engrossed in sketching, on the hostile Zulu bank of a river while the cavalry patrol had returned to the safety of the British side. Redvers Buller, the fiery officer in command, who had a dislike of newspapermen, bellowed to Fripp: 'Return this instant or be sent as prisoner to the rear.'

Fists Flying

The artist obeyed but he was furious. He confronted Buller and questioned his authority in giving him such a public reprimand. For a moment it looked like

Fripp was going to punch the red-faced Buller. Then Lord William Beresford stepped forward and reproved Fripp, whereupon the angry little artist attacked his tall lordship with flying fists. The fighters had to be dragged apart by two other newspapermen.

Fripp's major oil paintings include 'The Attack on General Sir John McNeill's force near Suakim,' shown at the Royal Academy in 1886. Fripp had been present at the battle in the Sudan and his pictures together with his eyewitness report appeared in *The Graphic* in April 1885.

In 1898, the *Daily Graphic* sent him to cover the great Klondike Gold Rush. He travelled via the Stikine Trail, a trek that proved so arduous that only the very toughest could negotiate it. Charles Fripp's last campaign was the Boer War of 1899-1902. He died in 1906 aged 52, worn out by a strenuous life spent bringing military news and pictures to the British public •

Peter Newark

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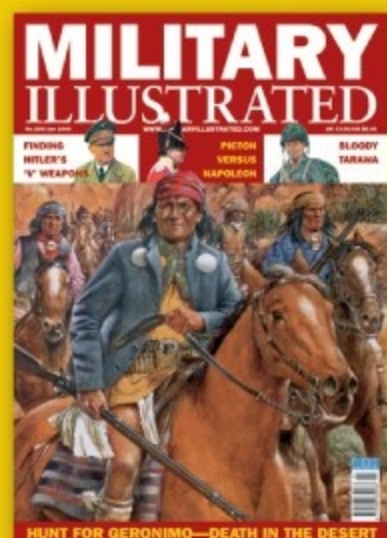
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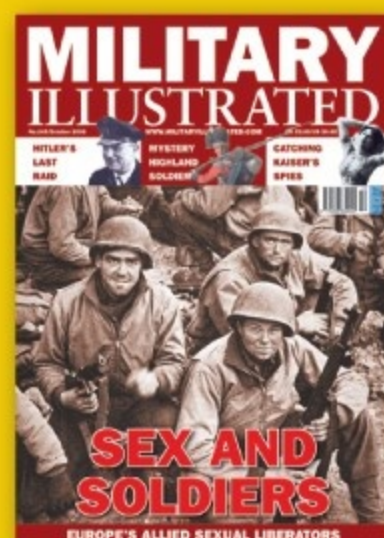
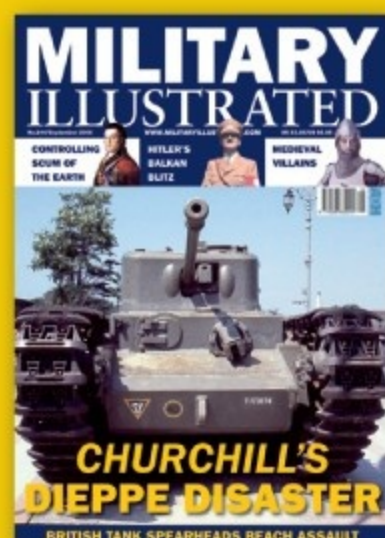
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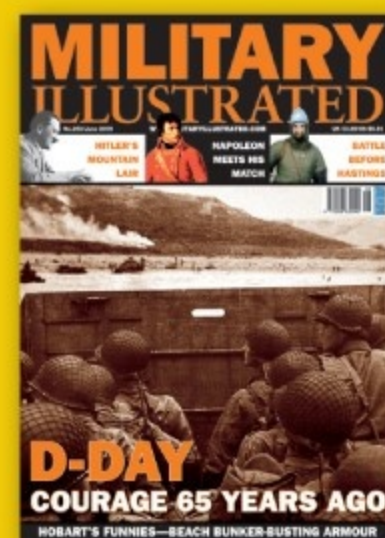
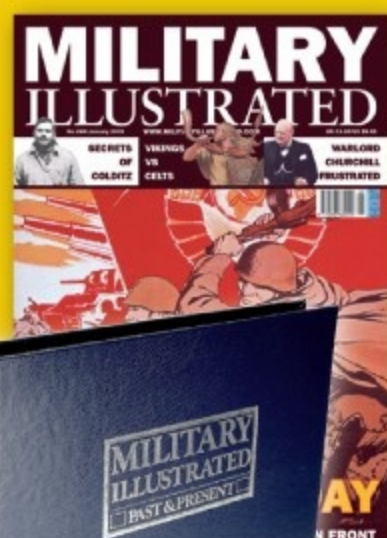


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Re-enactors



Heroes of the Blitz

This autumn sees the 70th anniversary of the Blitz and PHILIPP ELLIOT-WRIGHT visits some of the re-enactor groups commemorating it.

The London Blitz began by accident. At the commencement of the battle of Britain, Hitler forbade the bombing of London, expecting to easily defeat Britain in the aftermath of stunning victories in Poland, France and the Low Countries. Hitler desired a triumphal entry into a physically intact London, just as he had in Paris in June. Then, in the early hours of 25 August, a handful of German aircraft, tasked with attacking oil storage tanks on the Essex bank of the Thames Estuary became lost in the clouds and mistakenly unloaded their bombs over the east end of London. Later that very night, a handful of RAF Wellington bombers purposely returned the compliment by bombing Berlin. Hitler and Goring had promised the German people that this could never happen, and driven by a mixture of damaged pride and a mistaken belief RAF fighter command was almost defeated, orders

were given to commence daylight raids on London.

Civilian frontline

Despite heavy fighter escort, the daylight raids suffered heavy loss, and on 7 September the first night-time raid occurred when 300 bombers targeted London docks. At first, the Luftwaffe hit London day and night, but, facing rising losses, by mid-September a decision was taken to rely on just night attacks. These continued without interruption for two months. It must be stressed that other British cities also suffered night time raids, including Belfast, Birkenhead, Bristol, Cardiff, Coventry, Glasgow, Manchester, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton, and many more, but none with the continuous intensity suffered by London.

Both anti-aircraft and night fighter defences were rudimentary at this stage in the war and the Luftwaffe had a free hand

in the night skies over Britain. During September and October, the Luftwaffe suffered barely 1% casualties in aircraft and the loss of less than 100 aircrew, whilst over 43,000 British civilians were killed and 139,000 wounded, the vast majority being Londoners. Yet, as with the battle of Britain, the Blitz was a failure. As history has taught us, be it the bombing of Britain or the subsequent bombing of Germany, targeting civilians simply increases a determination to fight on against the high altitude enemy.

Various re-enactment groups portray this historic conflict. In terms of the military side, The Garrison, a group based in Southern England with a focus on the Royal Regiment of Artillery in the Second World War, includes both an Ack-Ack and searchlight section. The former, uniformed as the 82 Battery 25th Light Anti Aircraft Regiment (TA) uses a 40mm Bofers, alongside various support vehicles, especially a Ford Bofers Gun Tractor, to present the ground based front line, as it were, against the Luftwaffe. Alongside, and an integral part of Ack-Ack Command, is the searchlight section, in this case portraying members of the only all female regiment in the British Army, the 93rd (Mixed) Searchlight Regiment (TA). The group has a number of original searchlights, including both a 150cm and a 90cm that were capable of highlighting aircraft at altitude.

Indeed, the Blitz provided both women and the many other civilians who were not serving in the military an opportunity to participate in the conflict. The popular image of a member of the Air Raid Precaution Service or the Royal Observer Corps in 1940 is of a middle-aged man in civilian clothing and an armband. This aspect is recreated by members of the Home Front, a group based in Northern England who portray the range of vital supporting roles, including the Home Guard, the Royal Observer Corps, ordinary civilians, police officers and many others who were very much at the sharp end of the Blitz •

Further information on The Garrison can be found at www.thegarrison.org.uk and on the Home Front at www.ukhomefront.co.uk



Models



TRUCKIN' IN THE JUNGLE

FINE MOLDS 1:35 TYPE 94 6-WHEELED TRUCK HARD-TOP (FM30) CANVAS TOP (FM31)

Marcus Nicholls reviews two new WW2 Imperial Japanese Army truck kits from Fine Molds of Japan

Two Type 94 trucks have been released side-by-side; one with a hard-cab and one with a canvas roof, but otherwise the models are the same. They will be the perfect complement for Fine Molds' extensive collection of WW2 Japanese tanks as they were used extensively in the many theatres of operation in the Pacific and could also be seen at airfields and in towns.

The trucks are injection moulded in sand-yellow polystyrene and feature separate ladder chassis, fully represented drive trains (no engine though), double leaf-spring suspension and a well detailed cab interior. It's good to see properly depicted foot pedals here instead of the cursory two-dimensional, rectangular blobs that are sometimes moulded. A decal is provided for the instrument panel dials.

Another positive move by FM is the inclusion of individual windscreen wipers – a minor point I know, but so much

better than having them moulded in with the frame, or worse, in with the clear windscreen glazing as is sometimes the case on truck kits. The large, attractive headlamps feature raised light bulbs inside and they are topped off with clear lenses – excellent.

Moving to the cargo deck, and here the beautifully rendered side panels are unspoiled by ejector pin marks, hoorah! Mould-removal assistance is provided instead by snip-off pips as employed successfully by Dragon and are all the better for it.

The only negative point I could find with both kits are the tyres; instead of full tread detail, they just have a raised band around the running face which spoils their appearance a little. Great kits otherwise and I look forward to building at least one!

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Militaria Superior Militaria

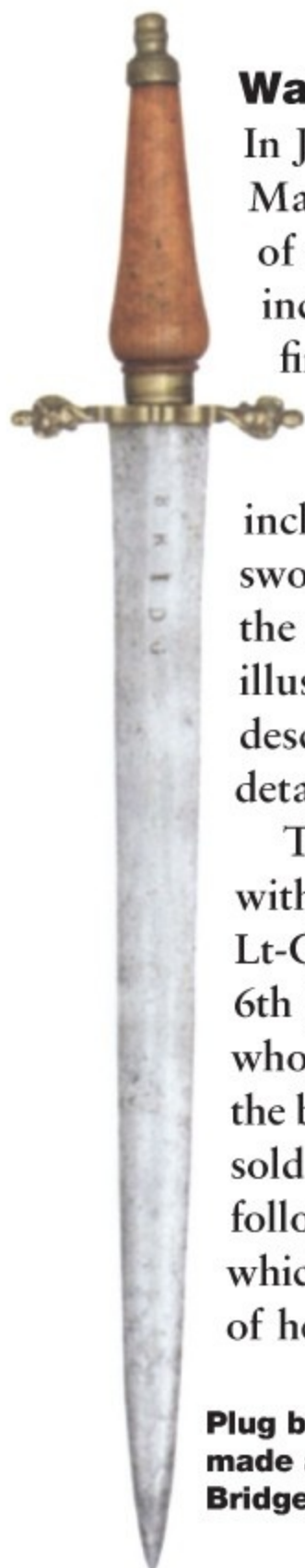
In July, Lockdales of Suffolk held a sale of more than 500 lots comprising badges and general items and apart from some medals, which sold for more than five figures, the vast majority of lots went for less than £100. There were a few that sold for £12 and, even with a 17% commission rate, these prices are within the pocket-money range of enthusiastic beginners. These prices help encourage interest and hopefully those with such an interest will blossom into serious students of arms, armour, militaria and military studies, fields which are currently suffering under the onslaught of prejudice, political correctness and ignorance.

Waterloo veterans

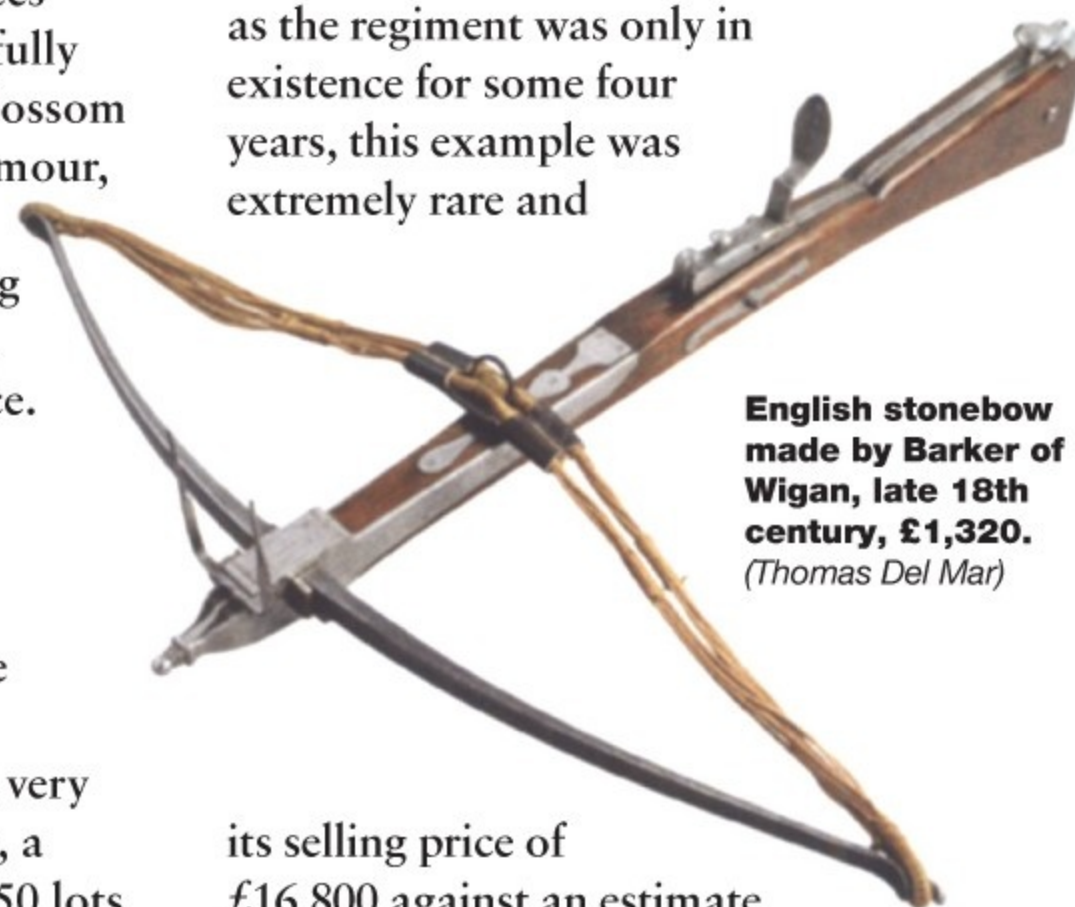
In June, Thomas Del Mar held a London sale of nearly 500 lots that included, among some very fine arms and armour, a section of some 50 lots of superior militaria, including uniforms, headdress, swords and medals. As always, the items were beautifully illustrated in full colour and the descriptions were full and very detailed.

The first lot was the jacket with other personal items of Lt-Col Fiennes Sanderson Miller, 6th (or Inniskilling) Dragoons, who was severely wounded at the battle of Waterloo and they sold for £30,000. This lot was followed by his Waterloo Medal, which sold for £34,800. A group of heavy cavalry swords, the

Plug bayonet of late-17th century made at the English factory of Shotley Bridge, £2,280. (Thomas Del Mar)



property of Captain Francis Stuart, 2nd (or Royal North British) Dragoons, who also saw action at Waterloo, which with two portraits of the man and his wife, sold for £7,800. Rare though these items were, with such a good provenance even rarer was the King's Colour (Monson's), 96th Regiment of Foot, and dating from the mid-18th century. Any flag of this date is rare and as the regiment was only in existence for some four years, this example was extremely rare and



English stonebow made by Barker of Wigan, late 18th century, £1,320. (Thomas Del Mar)

its selling price of £16,800 against an estimate of £3000-£5000 was no surprise.

There were other choice pieces including a silver-gilt gorget, probably of an officer of the Royal East India Company Volunteers. This is an example of what is usually regarded as the last surviving piece of armour worn by officers and was suspended from a ribbon around the throat. This one dated from 1801-1802, was in good condition and sold for £1,440.

Fine armour

There was an attractive group of shoulder-belt plates and these are attractive in appearance and well sought after by collectors. Their design varied from regiment to regiment and they were worn by regular, militia and volunteer officers. Many were silver or silver gilt or brass whilst others were decorated with



Shoulder belt plate of 1st (or the King's) Dragoon Guards, £5,400. (Thomas Del Mar)

coloured enamels. The highest price of £5,400 was paid for a rare, oval, gilded-brass plate of the 1st (or the King's) Dragoon Guards and dated from the late 18th century.

The rest of this sale was equally interesting with a fine selection of armour including a number of well-made miniatures, which sold for prices between £432 and £1,440. A full sized, composite North Italian field armour of the late 16th century made an impressive £26,400.

Among a good selection of antique firearms there were several outstanding pieces, including a good example of the forerunner of the Winchester repeating rifle. It was a .41 calibre First Model Volcanic lever-action carbine made about 1855-1857. It retained much of its original colouring and exceeded its top estimate of £15,00 as the hammer fell at £18,000 •



Carved limewood model miniature armour based on a 15th century armour from Churburgh, £600. (Thomas Del Mar)

Frederick Wilkinson

Museums & Shows

East Surrey Soldiers

JOHN NORRIS visits a regimental museum in Guildford

Dating back to 1706 and 1756, the 31st Regiment of Foot and 70th regiment of Foot were amalgamated in 1881 to become the 1st and 2nd Battalions the East Surrey Regiment. The two regiments could not have come from more different backgrounds before being brought together, as told at The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum, Clandon Park, Guildford, Surrey GU4 7RQ.

Nine VCs

Distinct from its sister regiment, the East Surrey has as its cap badge the Arms of Guildford on an eight-pointed Star of the Order of the Garter with the legend 'Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense'. Like the West Surrey, this regiment has been awarded nine VCs, of which three are held by the museum. In fact, three of these awards were gained during the First World War

for actions on Hill 60 in April 1915. The regiment was to gain an impressive list of battle honours in WW1, including the Somme. In fact, on 1 July 1916, the first day of the battle, Captain WP Neville encouraged his men to advance by kicking footballs towards the German lines. He was killed during the attack and afterwards two of the footballs used were recovered from the battlefield. Today, one of these footballs is on display at the museum.

Like its sister regiment, the East Surrey has served in many campaigns across the world, including the Peninsular War, where it was awarded several battle honours, and this continued to WW2. The 2nd Battalion was serving in Singapore at the time of the Japanese invasion in 1942. When the garrison surrendered in February 1942, the battalion had lost 521 men out of a strength of 786. The surviving 265 were taken prisoner and a further 149 men were

lost in captivity. The suffering and hardship is told in the museum, which it shares with the West Surrey Regiment and the displays contain weapons, regimental souvenirs, uniforms and other trophies.



The museum can be contacted on 01483 223419 to confirm hours of opening. There is full disabled access and the shop stocks related titles in books. Access to the archives for research purposes can be obtained by written request.

October UK Diary

■ 2: Saturday

The Abingdon Branch of the IPMS is holding its Model Show 2010 at Larkmead School, Farringdon Road, Abingdon OX14 1RF. Further details telephone 0776 934 5271.

The Stockport Militaria Collectors Society is holding its Arms, Armour and Militaria Fair at the Britannia Hotel, Dialstone Lane, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6AG. Further details telephone 01709 557622 or visit www.stockportmilitaria.org



■ 2-3: Saturday & Sunday

Forties Weekend is being held at Rougham Airfield, near Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP30 9LZ. Military vehicles on display along with re-enactment encampments of the period. Further details telephone 01359 270524.

■ 3: Sunday

Autumn sale of militaria at Hack Green Secret Nuclear Bunker, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 8AL. Doors open 10am with entrance £2.50. Further details telephone 01270 623353.

Militaria and Medal Fair is being held at the Yate Leisure Centre, Kennedy Way, Yate near

Chipping Sodbury, Bristol BS37 4DQ. Doors open between 10.30am and 2.30pm with £2 entrance. Further details telephone 01753 534777.

■ 4: Monday

The Stockport Militaria Collectors Society is holding its monthly meeting at the Britannia Hotel, Dialstone Lane, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6AG, with guest speaker, Derek Austin, presenting a talk on the Russian Mosin-Nagant Sniping Rifle. Presentation commences at 7.45pm. Further details telephone 01709 557622 or visit www.stockportmilitaria.org

■ 10: Sunday

South of England Militaria Arms and Armour Fair 2010 at the Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TZ. Door open until 2pm. Further details telephone either 0759 551 981 or 01634 823807 or visit www.thedockyard.co.uk

■ 16: Saturday

The Northern Branch of the BMSS is holding its annual competition at Sale Moor Methodist Church. All are welcome. Further details telephone 0161 499 2803.

■ 17: Sunday

The Lincoln and Newark Model Clubs, regional branches of the IPMS, have once again joined

together to present their annual Model Expo Show, which will be held at the Grandstand, Southwell Racecourse, Nottingham. Entrance to Expo 2010 is free. Traders' stalls, competitions and club displays. Further details telephone 01522 804661.

■ 21-24: Thursday to Sunday

Trafalgar Salutes at Fort Nelson, Fareham, Hants PO17 6AN. Gun firing events at this Royal Armouries site to mark the 205th anniversary of Nelson's great battle in 1805. Further details telephone 01329 233734 or visit www.royalarmouries.org

■ 23: Saturday

The Bognor Military Modelling and Wargaming Society is holding its annual Model show at West Meads Community Hall, Bognor Regis PO21 5SB. Doors open between 10am and 4pm. This event is in support of Help for Heroes. Further details email: nick.sandford@hotmail.com

■ 24: Sunday

Militaria and Collectors' Fair is being held at The Maltings, off Bridge Square, Farnham, Surrey GU9 7QR. Doors open between 10am and 2pm with £3 entrance. Further details telephone 01892 730233 or visit www.militaria-fairs.com

Continued on p58

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Book Reviews

The Rapier: History and Use of a Fearsome Weapon

by Duncan Noble
(Ken Trotman Publishing) 58pp,
softback, **£12.50**

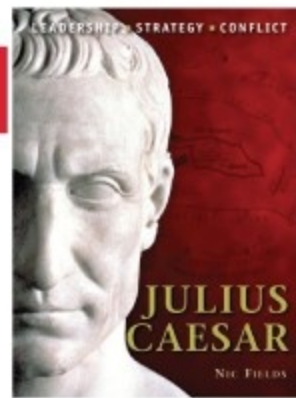


Excellent little summary of the rapier, its history and use from the 15th century onwards. The types of rapier are described and its effectiveness as weapon. The author was a sabre fencer for many years and gives a particularly vivid insight into the use of the sword, as well as a fascinating account of its use in swashbuckling movies.

Peter Marriot

Julius Caesar

by Nic Fields
(Osprey Command) 64p, softback,
£11.99



We know that Julius Caesar was a great commander because he tells us so in his propaganda works! His name has become synonymous with the creation of the Roman Empire and its rulers. Born in 100 BC, he did not exercise active military command as part of his *cursus honorum* (aristocratic political career) until he was 42. Yet, in a single decade (59-51 BC), his legions conquered Gaul (and briefly invaded Britain twice) before returning to Rome as a conqueror (a colour illustration has him pondering on the banks of the Rubicon while his soldiers play dice in the background) and initiating a civil war which gave him, in 45 BC, complete victory over his rivals, which was only spoilt by his assassination in the following year.

Caesar's writings provide valuable insights into the warfare of the era examined in this volume and portrayed in one campaign and four battle maps. There are the usual lush illustrations and reconstructions to carry the story along. Not that this is a difficult read from an author whose own *cursus* is interesting as a former Royal Marine

and academic, and who writes in a lively style occasionally veering into purple prose. I particularly liked his aphoristic statement: "War then as now was Janus-faced: fight a war of the mind as much as a war of blood and iron; pay off the passive; pacify the proud". Caesar would have approved!

Matthew Bennett

War for the Throne: the Battle of Shrewsbury, 1403

by John Barratt
(Pen & Sword) 142pp,
hardback, **£19.95**



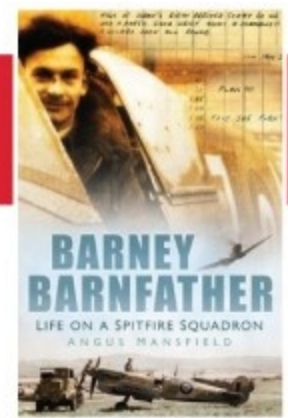
The battle of Shrewsbury is probably best known for the blooding of Henry V to be. In the Welsh wars (up to 1410) that followed, he learned the military trade of raid, ambush and siege; an apprenticeship for his conquest of Normandy a decade later. The conflict was a product of the usurpation of his father Henry IV (Bolingbroke) in 1399, one of several resulting rebellions, but the most dangerous, led by Henry Percy "Hotspur" -son of the earl of Northumberland. His alliance with the revivalist Welsh prince Owain Glyn Dwr, in revolt since 1400, created a political and military threat that had to be met in open battle. The royal army probably outnumbered the rebels by 2:1 and its superiority in archers forced Hotspur to take the offensive. He was nearly successful as Prince Henry was shot in the face by an arrow and the royal standard bearer killed, but the rebels were eventually overwhelmed and he died in the rout.

King Henry built a chapel a chantry chapel on the site, now a largely Victorian church which stands in a well-interpreted battlefield park. The book's illustrations include black-and-white photographs showing the wider context of the war, with eight campaign and battle maps, although these are rather simplistic and all lack a scale. The text is a mixture of narrative and topic boxes (dealing with tactics and weaponry), both demonstrating the author's sound grasp of his material. Above all, he presents a balanced view of the value of archery in battle, avoiding a celebration of the longbow alone.

Matthew Bennett

Barnfather: Life on a Spitfire Squadron

by Angus Mansfield
(The History Press) 242pp, softback, **£8.99**



The Battle of Britain by Roy C Nesbit
(Pitkin Guide) 22pp, softback, **£4.99**

Kent and The Battle of Britain: the long hot summer of 1940 by Robin J Brooks (Countryside Books) 176pp, softback, **£12.99**

In combination, the Spitfire fighter aircraft and the air campaign known as the Battle of Britain, in 1940-41, have an iconic status in British military history. Roy Nesbit's Pitkin Guide is a well-illustrated introduction suitable to anybody new to the subject, such as a youngster working on a school project. The final page lists sites and memorials to be visited in connection with the dramatic events, such as RAF museums (with their websites) and the powerful Paul Day sculpture near Westminster, commemorating the 65th anniversary of the conflict.

Robin Brooks' focus on Kent deals with the county that bore much of the brunt of the Luftwaffe's attentions in 1940. There is plenty of anecdotal and personal detail in this account, even including the experience of a German pilot, Werner Goetting, whose Messerschmitt 109 had been shot down and the pilot taken prisoner. He returned in 1977 to see his old plane's excavation and to find that friendship and cups of tea had replaced the enmity of 40 years earlier. A plethora of contemporary photographs bring the story to life and also suggest opportunities for after-the-battle type visits. Anyone looking for a more detailed exploration of the life of a Spitfire pilot should turn to Angus Mansfield's publication and exploration of his grandfather's Flying Log Book. Barnfather's war experience was extremely varied, from defying the Luftwaffe in the UK, to the life-and-death struggle to preserve Malta from capture by Axis forces, so crucial to the Allied successes in North Africa, supporting the invasions of Sicily and Italy in 1943-44, and even involvement in the fighting of the Greek Civil War. This is a first-rate interpretation of a participant's story and is full of fascinating detail for air war buffs.

Matthew Bennett

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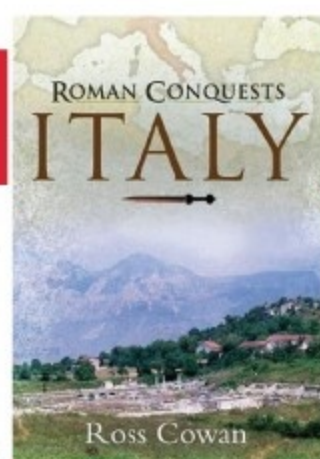
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Book Reviews

Roman Conquests: Italy

by Ross Cowan (Pen & Sword) 162pp, hardback, **£19.99**



Roman Conquests: Macedonia and Greece

by Philip Matyszak (Pen & Sword) 192pp, hardback, **£19.99**

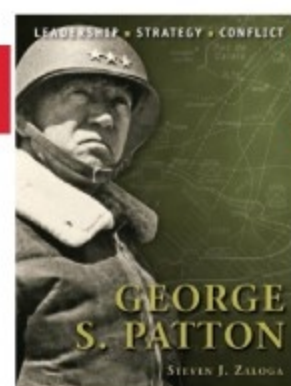
The rise of Rome from city state to world empire is a fascinating story. The Romans had their own myth of origins, but the reality is of determined and continual wars of expansion from around 400 BC until the creation of the principate by Octavian-Augustus in 27 BC and then for another century afterwards. The first rivals were the Etruscan cities and Cowan's excellent study takes the reader through the complex series of campaigns, above all the Samnite Wars, in which Rome eventually triumphed. The text is well-supported by half-a-dozen black-and-white maps and a good section of illustrations, including four high-quality colour plates depicting foot-duels between Romans, Gauls, Etruscans and a Tarentine warrior, making the book suitable for those just interested in the history and also anyone interested in the wargaming potential.

The second volume is much broader in geographical and historical context and the political situation covered is also more complex; but this is all well explained by the author. There were three wars, two against Macedon and one against the Seleucid regional-power ruled by Antiochus. Roman victories in battle, especially Cynoscephalae (197 BC) proved their legionary system to be superior to the long-dominant Macedonian phalanx owing to the flexibility of its formation and equipment of its soldiers. Again there are useful maps and a full-colour photographic section featuring some atmospheric shots of the battle sites and four colour plates of troop types (including a magnificent war-elephant).

Matthew Bennett

George S. Patton

by Steven J Zaloga (Osprey Command) 64pp, softback, **£11.99**



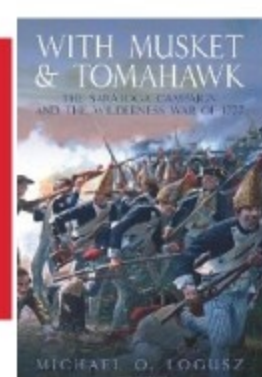
The term Caesarian became a way of describing a general with political pretensions, even to the extent of becoming a supreme ruler. The American Republican system accommodates this aspiration, although it was the suave and managerial Eisenhower who achieved the Presidency. Patton has a different reputation as a bullish, rash and awkward individual, a stereotypical arrogant cavalryman (although he was early to recognise the value of tanks). As the author demonstrates, this is a one-sided representation. Patton was a charismatic leader, but also a military intellectual who studied the campaigns of William the Conqueror prior to the 1944 invasion of Normandy. He also played a crucial diplomatic role in winning over the Vichy French troops in North Africa in 1942-43.

Indeed, much of his public manner, beautifully portrayed by George C Scott in the 1970 film, was acting. Patton admitted: 'I wish to hell I had a fighting face; you are either born with one or you are not. Having practised for hours in front of the mirror I can work up a fairly ferocious expression...[!]' This volume provides a useful survey of Patton's campaigns, with maps of Sicily, Normandy to the Marne, and the relief of Bastogne in the Ardennes in December 1944, for which he most deserved fame. It is good introduction to a more complex man than he is usually perceived.

Matthew Bennett

With Musket and Tomahawk: The Saratoga Campaign and the Wilderness War of 1777

by Michael O Logusz (Casemate) 409pp, hardback, **£19.99**



The American War of Independence was the only serious blot in Britain's military and naval record as the nation built an empire over the period 1700-1850. This is not to say that British forces did not lose a battle, or even a campaign, as frequently occurred during the Napoleonic Wars, but

to lose a war, and especially at sea, was a significant blow. The American public is justifiably proud of the successes that their forbears achieved, at first with only scratch forces, although later in a crucial alliance with the French, who provided men, military training, and above all a powerful navy to aid the cause.

This study of the Saratoga campaign, in which the forces of British General Burgoyne were trailed, corralled and finally forced to surrender, demonstrated for the first time the military potential of the Revolution. It displays evidence of scholarly research and is supported by half-a-dozen quite useful maps; but unfortunately the presentation in the form of a diary makes it an awkward read. The author's style also leaves much to be desired, since it is journalistic and at times novelistic, with very short chapters and paragraphs that give the feel of a rather breathless enthusiast, rather than a measured account. I would not put anyone off reading the book if they found the subject interesting; but it is a pity that there was not more editorial intervention to help the reader.

Matthew Bennett

Oct UK Diary *continued*

■ 30-31: Saturday & Sunday

The Plastic Modellers Association in Australia will be holding the South Australian Scale Model Expo 2010 at the Centenary Gym, Christian Brothers College, 214 Wakefield Street, Adelaide. Further details visit

www.gumnut.net/SAPMA/Expo/index.shtml

■ 31: Sunday

Militaria and Medal Fair at the Stratford Leire Centre, Bridgefoot, Stratford CV37 6YY. Doors open between 10.30am and 2.30pm. Further details telephone 01753 534777.

Chelmsford Militaria Fair at the Marconi Social Club, Beehive Lane, Chelmsford, Essex. Doors open between 10am and 2pm.

Further details telephone 075 9551 1981.

All modelling societies, war gaming clubs, re-enactment units and museums are invited to send news and details of their special events to:

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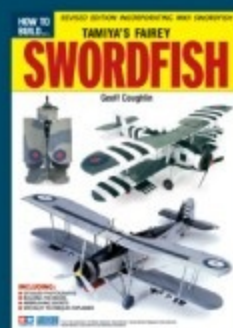
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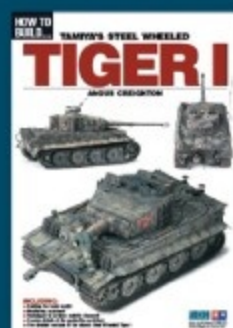
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